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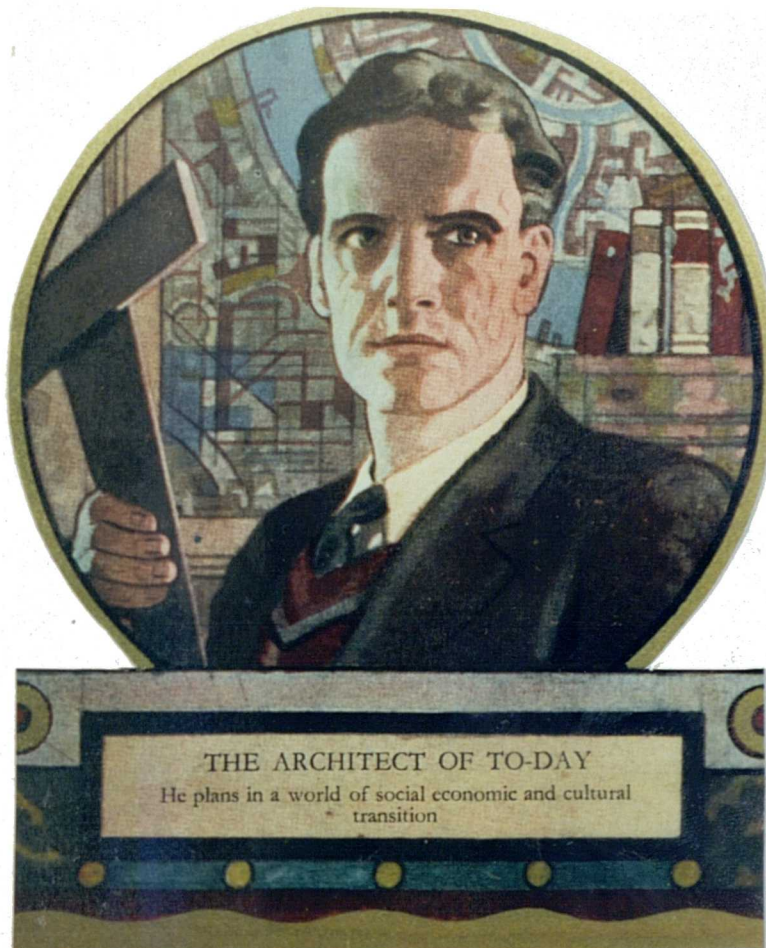
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**THE ROLE OF THE ARCHITECT IN POST-WAR STATE HOUSING:**

**A case study of the housing work of the  
London County Council 1939 - 1956**



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**PhD Thesis**

**UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK**

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AASTA	Association of Architects, Surveyors and Technical Assistants
ABT	Association of Building Technicians
<u>AD</u>	<u>Architectural Design</u>
<u>AJ</u>	<u>Architects' Journal</u>
<u>AR</u>	<u>Architectural Review</u>
CD&GP Com.	Civil Defence and General Purposes Committee
E Com.	Establishment Committee
F Com.	Finance Committee
GLRO	Greater London Records Office
GP Com.	General Purposes Committee
H Com.	Housing Committee
H&PH Com.	Housing and Public Health Committee
LCC	London County Council
NFBTO	National Federation of Building Trades Operatives
RIBA	Royal Institute of British Architects
SAR	National Association of Swedish Architects
SCR	Society for the Cultural Relations with the USSR
TUC	Trades Union Congress

## SUMMARY

This research offers a critical history of the rôle played by the architect in post Second World War State Housing. It takes the housing output of the London County Council, from 1939 to 1956, as a case study. The aim of the research was to analyse the main strategies of the post-war Labour Government's housing policy from 1945 to 1951, and to assess the success of their implementation by the London County Council. Another aim was to analyse the changes in the architectural style of the Council's housing, and to relate these to contemporary theory and ideology.

The thesis is divided into two parts. Part I considers the broader general issues. Section 1.1 looks at debates concerning architectural practice and theory. The status and function of the public architect is analysed. The influence of new art historical methodologies on architectural criticism are assessed, and the development of architectural groupings and the definition of three paradigms for reconstruction are described. Section 1.2 analyses government housing policy from 1939 to 1956, highlighting the differences between Labour and Conservative strategies. The political, social and architectural implications of Labour's policy of 'mixed development' are outlined. Section 1.3 looks at the structure and staffing of the LCC Architects' Department housing division, and describes the changes in architectural responsibility for the Council's housing.

Part II analyses the housing work of the LCC from 1939 to 1956. Section 2.1 looks at the period 1939 to 1945 when J.H. Forshaw was in charge of the design and planning of the Council's housing. The Woodberry Down scheme is analysed in detail and its innovatory features are related to the principles outlined in the County of London Plan. Section 2.1 covers the housing work when C. Walker as Director of Housing and Valuer was responsible for the Council's housing. Section 2.3 analyses the work of R.H. Matthew's new housing division set up in 1950, describing six schemes designed between 1950 and 1956. The development of a Swedish and a Corbusian style in these schemes is outlined, and the architectural and ideological differences between them are described.

The thesis concludes that the Labour Government's attempt to introduce a radical socialist housing policy (from 1945 to 1951) which relied upon the theory of 'Mixed development' to create complete and balanced communities, as illustrated in the work of the LCC, was of limited scope and success. The rôle of the architect was seen to be a marginal one, limited to aesthetic developments rather than the political or social aspects of state housing. No new or consistent 'Welfare State style' of architecture was produced by the LCC from 1945 to 1951 to correspond to this redefinition of state housing. The later schemes of Matthew's new housing division were thus merely aesthetic re-workings of what were basically pre-war housing policies.



## Preface

I started work on this research project nearly seven years ago, in October 1981, after completing an undergraduate degree in the History of Art at Warwick University. My interests then were very much concerned with the contemporary debates on methodology, which at that time I saw as Art History as a discipline, attempting at rather a late date, to tackle the intellectual challenge posed by Structuralist theories of the 1970s. A reading of the work of especially Hadjinicolaou and Gramsci convinced me of the need to extend the rather limited formalist bias of much of the Architectural History that I had been exposed to as an undergraduate, and to try out alternative methodologies borrowed from other disciplines. The origins of this research project were therefore founded upon very specific personal intellectual aims.

However life is rarely as straight forward and smooth as one would wish, and the completion of this thesis has had to wait seven years. This has generated the problem of both my own intellectual growth and the intellectual development of the discipline, massively overtaking the original interests and aims of the project. Given that it was not feasible to start again and to jettison several years work, this project has been written up and completed as originally intended. If the methodological aims and interests, with their Structuralist bias seem outmoded, they will at least be consistently applied throughout the project. Consolation can also be gained by the recent abandonment of a lot of Post-structuralist theory and Deconstruction as a methodological tool. Witness for example David Lodge's review of the Tate's symposium on 'Deconstruction in Art and Architecture', in which he remarks that: "Deconstructionist criticism is in retreat, especially in America, from

something called the New Historicism, a quasi-Foucauldian situating of literature in its socio-economic context",<sup>1</sup> This retreat he relates to the intellectual left's suspicion that deconstruction's "critique of reason is a pretext for evading social and political responsibilities",<sup>2</sup>

Perhaps, after all, this project will still be able to be more than an interesting 'period piece', needing to be dusted off before reading.

Nick Day, June 1988.

## Introduction

The aims and interests of this research project require some introduction. The choice of a research area in 20th-century British Architecture in the immediate post second world war period provided an opportunity to study in great detail the interrelationship between architects, architectural style, and social context. Access to archive material, personalities involved who were still alive, and a considerable amount of contemporary criticism of the buildings, enabled a very clear picture of the period to be built up with few gaps in the data necessary for a comprehensive overview to be made. The period was also one of major ideological and political change, and therefore offered plenty of scope for analyses to be made into the relationships between architectural style and meaning.

The main interest in undertaking this research work was to assess how useful certain Structuralist methodologies would be for an understanding of the production of buildings in specific contexts and for the analysis of their associated meanings within these contexts. As an undergraduate I had read N. Hadjinicolaou's Art History and Class Struggle,<sup>1</sup> and J. Wolff's The Social Production of Art,<sup>2</sup> both of which encouraged me to look beyond the rather restrictive formal bias of much of the architectural history then on offer. I had also come across the work of Gramsci, especially the essay by Chantal Mouffe on 'Hegemony and Ideology in Gramsci',<sup>3</sup> and became interested in the further theoretical development of Marx's 'Base and Superstructure' model. This led me to read T. Eagleton's Criticism and Ideology<sup>4</sup> and to look at Structuralist theories in general.

The result of this exposure to Structuralist theory was to help me formulate a methodological approach to architectural history that took the emphasis away from a purely stylistic analysis or a biographical approach, and to locate the area for research in a much broader social context. As the title of this thesis suggests, it is the rôle played by the individual architect within this network of historical, political, ideological and artistic contexts that is the real core of this research.

The dates, 1939 to 1956, have been chosen to cover the period of office of the post-war Labour Government, 1945-1951. This immediate post-war period was one of immense ideological change, which saw the creation of the Welfare State. The rôle played by housing was of critical importance to this development, and in many ways was a far more significant area for the subsequent success of Welfare State policies than Health or Social Security. It, far more than these, embodied the far reaching and structural changes to society that were being attempted to be brought about in this period. If the architectural content of much of the building work of this period seems today to be of little interest, its political and ideological significance is very great. This is especially true at a time when the mixed economy Welfare State system, created in the 1940s, has been totally dismantled by Thatcherism. It is therefore a very opportune moment to assess the successes and failures of this Welfare State experiment. The cut off date of 1956 has been chosen as a fitting terminus for the optimistic post-war idealism, with the Suez crisis and the invasion of Hungary starting the break-up of the "post-war social honeymoon".<sup>5</sup>

The two articles by R. Banham, 'The new Brutalism' and 'Revenge of the Picturesque: English Architectural polemics, 1945-65',<sup>6</sup> provided an

interesting starting point, and suggested an outline for the complex ideological differences within the architectural profession in the 1940s and 1950s. Another aim of this research has therefore been to extend Banham's analysis and to look in more detail into the debates concerning architectural theory and practice of the period.

The use of the London County Council as a case study for the research was an obvious choice. The LCC as the largest Local Authority in the country, was not only the main organisation involved in the reconstruction of London in the immediate post-war period, but also had the largest public Architects' Department, with a staff of some 3,000 employees, both technical and administrative, which included some of the best architects of the period. J. Furneaux Jordan's article 'LCC.: New standards in official architecture',<sup>7</sup> as early as 1956, considered the work of the LCC as of major importance. His concluding paragraph stated "This article has been an attempt to describe an <sup>9</sup>organisation deserving a whole volume; it is to be hoped that some day that volume will be written".<sup>8</sup> This thesis, while not perhaps claiming to be the volume that Furneaux Jordan would have wished for, does at least attempt to suggest the significant rôle played by the Architect's Department of the LCC in the development of new approaches to state housing. It especially aims to res urrect the important rôle and influence that J.H. Forshaw played, both in preparing the County of London Plan and in defining new housing strategies, most notably the introduction of the 'mixed development' concept into local authority housing as represented by the Woodberry Down Estate.

The structure of this thesis is divided into two parts. The first part analyses the broader issues concerning housing. Section 1.1 looks

at the broader debates concerning architectural theory and practice. The status and rôle of the public architect and the attempt to form a Trade Union for architects are analysed. The contemporary debates concerning new methodologies for Architectural History are related to different attitudes to the rôle of architectural form. Three models, or paradigms, are defined as the basis for three ideological approaches to the design and style of housing in the post-war period. Section 1.2 analyses the changes in Governmental definitions of the rôle and scope of state housing by analysing the new housing legislation and advice as given in the Housing Acts and Manuals. These changes are related to the new labour Government's ideological concept of the rôle of housing in the restructuring of post-war society. Section 1.3 looks at issues at the local authority level, and describes the structure and staffing changes of the Housing Division of the LCC's Architects' Department. The changes in control and responsibility for housing are followed, as well as the subsequent controversy over the architectural quality of the Council's housing work, which is seen in the public debate carried on in the Architects' Journal.

Part two analyses the housing output of the LCC, from 1939 to 1956. This part is subdivided into periods in which the architectural control of the Council's housing work was under different men. Thus Section 2.1 looks at the housing work of the Council whilst J.H. Forshaw, from 1939 to 1945, as Chief Architect to the Council, was responsible for Housing. Section 2.2 analyses the housing work of C. Walker, when he was Director of Housing and Valuer, from 1945-1950. Section 2.3 covers the period 1950-1956 when R.H. Matthew, and then L. Martin, were Chief Architects to the Council and in charge of Housing. Part two is followed by a conclusion which gives a summary of Parts I and II and then relates the

findings of the two parts and offers a critical overview of the period.

P A R T    I



### 1.1. DEBATES CONCERNING ARCHITECTURAL PRACTICE AND THEORY.

In this section the broader issues concerning architectural practice and architectural theory in general are introduced. The period 1939-1956 was one of lively debate, the war acting as a catalyst, precipitating many issues that had not been adequately discussed or resolved in the pre-war years. Many of these debates were central to the housing work of the LCC, either directly, with many of the LCC architects actively involved in them, or indirectly, with the debates being widely known in the profession as a whole. The key issues that were raised in this period were those concerned with (1) the status and function of the architect; the architect as a professional or a technician, in either private or public practice. These issues were polarized in the activities of the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) and the Association of Building Technicians (ABT). (2) The development of theories defining architectural style and the formation of distinct architectural groupings in the post-war period. (3) These debates were closely related to the development of paradigms for a Socialist reconstruction of Britain, most notably those associated with the International Modern Movement, Sweden, and Russia.

#### The Status and Function of the Architect.

(1) The Private versus Public Architect Debate. The inter-war years saw the transformation of the status and role of the architect and the development of new discourses concerning the scope and function of architecture. The traditional 19th-century view of the architect as a learned, cultured gentleman, and as a businessman in private practice had been gradually questioned and displaced. The influx of European Modern

Movement ideas also shifted the definition of architecture away from one concerned primarily with structure, façade treatment and style, to one which emphasized social planning and the political nature of architecture. J. Summerson saw the architect of the inter-war years, faced with these new conditions, as a near 'schizophrenic' who had:

for some reason or another, stepped out of his rôle, taken a look at the scene around him and then become obsessed with the importance not of architecture, but of the relation of architecture to other things. ...The architect has walked out of himself, rather like a second personality is seen to walk out<sup>of</sup> the first in a psychological film. He has ... left the first personality at the drawing board and taken the second ...on a world-tour of contemporary life - scientific research, sociology, psychology, engineering, the arts and a great many other things. Returning to the drawing-board he finds the first personality embarrassing and profoundly unattractive. There he stubbornly sits, smelling slightly of the 'styles'. So the <sup>1</sup>second personality sits down beside him and painfully guides his hand.

This conflict between the architect as an artist and the architect as a social scientist was central to many of the inter and post-war debates. Unlike Summerson in his above quoted essay, many of the Modern and progressive architects of the 1930s saw this new interest as no mere distortion of their previous role, but rather as adding a vital new dimension. Welles Coates stated in 1933 in 'Unit One' that: "we are not so much concerned with the formal elements of 'style' as with an architectural solution of the social and economic problems of today..."<sup>2</sup>.

These new ambitions forced many architects to acknowledge the political nature of architecture, and that: "in a capitalist society, the architect was merely a sycophant. Architects can no longer concern themselves with construction in a separated professional compartment. They must participate in the reconstruction of society".<sup>3</sup>

However after the Architects (Registration) Act of 1938, this professional compartment had become even more separate and enclosed.

RIBA, the largest and most powerful professional body for architects, was the main representative of this 'compartment' and was the locus for all debates concerning the profession. In the 1930s its controlling membership, according to E. Carter, was still dominated by: "middle-aged, middle class, widely cultured men - no women - with middle-sized practices".<sup>4</sup> It had also:

for 107 years upheld the ideal of the independent artist-constructor-business-man acting in a fiduciary relationship to his client. Its membership and council show a large predominance of private practitioners; its external policy and energies have been chiefly directed to persuading the 'building public' to employ qualified architects. The institute has never interested itself much in the status of the departmental principal, still less in that of the 'salaried' man in a humbler position.

The lack of representation of architects employed in public offices generated one of the main debates in the late 1930s, which continued into the 1940s and immediate post-war years. As early as 1919 a separate group, the Association of Architects, Surveyors and Technical Assistants (AASTA), was formed to "protect and advance salaried architects interests".<sup>6</sup> AASTA became the main mouthpiece for architects critical of RIBA's bias towards private practice, and was involved in the debates concerned with the drafting of the 1931 Registration Bill, putting pressure on RIBA to acknowledge the interests of architects in public offices. This culminated (with the aid of another newly formed group, the Incorporated Association of Architects and Surveyors, IAAS) in the formation in 1928 of a RIBA 'Salaried Members Committee', and AASTA gaining two representatives on the RIBA Registration Committee. The conflict of interests between RIBA and AASTA, seen also as a difference between private and public architects, continued into the 1930s. The discrepancy between the number of salaried architects in the profession and their representation on RIBA committees was illustrated by AASTA in

1935 by looking at the composition of the Registration Council. Its forty-one members included only one AASTA member compared to twenty-two Fellows of the RIBA. They claimed that only one out of forty-one members of the Registration Council represented salaried architects, despite 70%<sup>7</sup> of all architects being salaried. AASTA's criticism of RIBA was necessarily made from a highly partisan viewpoint. In fact RIBA was not totally immune to considering these issues. Carter suggests that "despite their general acceptance of customary forms, the leading men [he cites Sir Raymond Unwin] were well disposed to allow the RIBA to be a breeding ground of new ideas..."<sup>8</sup>

RIBA's pre-war position concerning the discussion of private versus public architects can be seen in the report of a RIBA special Committee on Official Architecture. The brief of this committee was to assess what policy RIBA should adopt for recommending architectural control for important Government or Public commissions. That is, whether they should recommend a private or a public architect: "that is to say which basis of employment under various circumstances is the more likely to produce the better architecture".<sup>9</sup> Sir Raymond Unwin was appointed as Chairman, with six other members, three in private practice and three in official posts.

The report opened by stating that:

the records show that during its hundred years of existence the Institute [RIBA] has conscientiously tried to carry out the duty entrusted to it in its original Charter, viz., the advancement of the art of architecture, and in doing so, not to discriminate between the various sections of its members. Architects holding official posts have been admitted to the highest positions within the Institute....

It continued by stating that members should be "regarded with the same consideration whether they occupy official positions or are in private

practice", and for the Council to ensure "that proper recognition is given to the official or salaried architect, and that he shall occupy that position to which his training, qualifications and work entitle him". The Committee also wanted to dispel "any erroneous impression that the institute is not mindful of the welfare of the considerable section of its members who are not in private practice".

Despite these statements suggesting an attitude of equity towards private and public architects, the report went on to identify administrative and organisational skills with architects employed in public offices, and the rarer skills of creative design to architects in private practice. It thought this because the complex activity of architecture required both artistic and business skills, which were rarely to be found in one man: "Fortunate individuals may be endowed in sufficient degree with all the varied faculties needed to give great efficiency in this complex activity. This can hardly be expected as the common lot of men". It therefore suggested that "official architects should realise that there may be men better qualified than themselves in the matter of design, and be more ready to seek their help and co-operation." The report concluded that:

(i) for all routine and technical matters ... the official architect is generally deemed best fitted to carry out these duties. (ii) Where, however, a new building of civic importance is required, the outside architect is more likely to be successful and to contribute to such an advance than one who is cumbered about with much serving.

Therefore this report, rather than developing a positive attitude towards the official architect, promulgated the concept of salaried architects as "plain men",<sup>10</sup> producing what was publicly termed "stale chocolate", and privately described as "stinking rubbish".<sup>11</sup>

However, by the late 1930s work in public offices was becoming a serious alternative for architects whose interests lay in more than obtaining a regular, if somewhat small, salary (although the attraction of a regular salary during the slump of the 1930s should not be under-estimated).<sup>12</sup> The official offices of L.H. Keay at Liverpool, R.A.H. Livett at Leeds, and J.H. Forshaw at the Miners Welfare Commission were obvious examples. The main stumbling block for the advancement of good official architecture was increasingly seen to be the low status and salary of architects in official employment; the argument being that higher salaries would attract better qualified architects away from the potentially more lucrative field of private practice.<sup>13</sup>

These unresolved debates continued into the post-war period. RIBA was still attacked for being an unrepresentative body, the more so as since 1940 RIBA elections for nominating Council members had been halted. There was some pressure from the younger and more progressive architects to hold elections before the end of the war,<sup>14</sup> this pressure was finally given into in July 1944.<sup>15</sup> This election resulted in six Association of Building Technicians (ABT - formerly called AASTA) members being elected onto the Council.<sup>16</sup> Another sign that RIBA was gradually acknowledging the importance of the official architect was the election of L.H. Keay, architect of Liverpool Council's Housing Department, to RIBA President. Keay was the first official architect to be a RIBA President. He opened his inaugural address apologetically:

you have elected as your President [for the first time] one whose whole career has been spent in the service of various local authorities. Lest any should be apprehensive as to the advisability of such a selection, I hasten to give an assurance that it will be my earnest endeavour to maintain the dignity<sup>17</sup> of the office and to preserve the traditions associated with it.

He then continued by referring directly to the previous conflicts:

This institute, with the catholicity to be expected of it, does not differentiate between those who serve as private individuals and those who elect to work as a servant of the community. Its function is to ensure that all who are admitted to its ranks are qualified to discharge satisfactorily the responsibilities they accept. Any who would attempt to divide our ranks do disservice to the Institute, for its strength depends upon the closest co-operation of all its members.

This call for the closing of RIBA's ranks to ensure its strength through unity, only paid lip service to the idea of the equity of private and public architects interests. Those architects looking for a definite statement of how this unity could be achieved would have been disappointed as Keay side-stepped the issues by stating: "I am naturally anxious, at a time like this, when we must work together in a spirit of co-operation for the greater good of all, to avoid raising any matters which might arouse controversy". He then immediately launched into a discussion of 'style', advancing a liberal attitude to the Modern Movement, but at the same time stating his belief in tradition. This diplomatic speech, seeking to ensure unity within the profession by touching upon, but diluting, most of the contentious debates RIBA had faced in the late 1930s, was a brilliant piece of a 'middle of the road' strategy.

Two other documents of the early 1940s also contributed to the private versus public debate. The first was an interim report of the RIBA Reconstruction Committee, published in December 1941,<sup>18</sup> entitled 'Reconstruction and the Architectural profession'. Section IV. considered the 'Status of the Official Architect' and argued for architects, especially official architects, to have a similar professional status as doctors or lawyers:

The official architect is qualified by the same standards as other architects. The profession and the Royal Institute recognise this, but his position is affected by the fact that his appointment is not a statutory one.

The profession urges upon the Government that just as the importance of the services of the lawyer, the accountant, the doctor and the surveyor is recognised by their holding obligatory appointments, so the importance of the architect should be equally recognised and remunerated.

It went on to suggest that especially the salaries for higher posts in government and local authority offices should be increased to make them similar to those salaries obtainable in private practice, and thus ensure attracting architects of "ability".

This report was followed by an explanatory note issued by the War Executive Committee. It reminded members of the pre-war work RIBA had done on behalf of official architects and recommended that:

members holding official positions should appreciate that the Institute is keenly alive to their particular interests and anxious to assist in the solution of their difficulties. Such members will do much to assist the efforts being made by the Institute to increase their influences and improve their status if they will inform the official Architects' Committee of any service which could be rendered them and by letting the Committee have the benefit of constructive suggestions which ought to be considered, particularly any in connection with post-war problems.

The Institute would then be in a position to represent more adequately the interests of this growing and important section of the profession.<sup>19</sup>

However this positive attitude was not completely maintained in the second document, which was the publication in the RIBA Journal of a paper given by Michael Waterhouse [F] Hon. Sec. at an informal general meeting held at RIBA on Tuesday 29th June 1943.<sup>20</sup> On the question of unity Waterhouse stated: "Unity ... is an ideal for the profession .... But like all ideals it is apt to get clouded by ideas, and to my mind it is so much an ideal as to be unattainable on this earth at this time". He



also spoke of the possible unification of RIBA with other organisations (meaning AASTA) but thought that this, if possible, would lower standards. He concluded that RIBA had a choice:

between either being in a position to speak for the entire profession; or adhering to its long-term policy of being able to voice the view of that part of it which sets before itself the highest ideals and standards.

Myself, I see only one line of action for this Institute. To adhere at all costs to its standards...

Despite these various avowals to the needs and interests of public architects, and the suggestion of a possible unity within the profession, in the 1940s RIBA was doing little that was constructive to alter the status or salaries of public architects. As Summerson observed concerning the changing relevance of RIBA as a professional body in 1942:

It cannot live indefinitely on prestige and the services of a superb library. It will have to promote the interests not merely of 'architecture' ... but of architects, it will have to conduct an active policy aimed at identifying a highly-trained profession with every building activity in the country. From the 'learned-society' condition of its origin it will have to develop into something rather like a Trade Union and at the same time, perhaps become a centre of, or at any rate the mouthpiece for, technical research.<sup>21</sup>

This it failed to do, and it was left up to others to attempt to raise the status and working conditions of the public architect.

(ii) ABT and Trade Unionism. Writing to the editor concerning the new layout in 1937 for the journal Keystone, (AASTA's bi-monthly publication), Maxwell Fry commented: "I would remind you that architecture as an intellectual excitement is but little affected by political considerations".<sup>22</sup> The members and editorial team thought otherwise. AASTA's formation and history had been since 1919, as already referred to, solely concerned with offering an organization that

presented a radical critique of RIBA's advocacy of a restricted professionalism and bias towards the interests of architects in private practice. In the same issue that Fry's comments appeared they stated their objectives<sup>23</sup> as: 1) to improve salaries, 2) to raise the status of architects, 3) to show the need for the involvement of architects in the social and political aspects of architecture, 4) to offer members a society, and 5) to represent them on boards and committees etc. To achieve this AASTA saw its role as a Trade Union for architects and other building technicians, and become affiliated to the T.U.C. in 1939. Also the revised format of Keystone in 1941 presented the journal as a Trade Union Bulletin, and not as a glossy illustrated architectural journal. In April 1942 it also tried to affiliate with the National Federation of Building Trades Operatives (NFBTO).

AASTA therefore wanted to see itself as part of the Labour movement, and its members as workers rather than as a professional middle class elite. Its change of name in 1942 illustrates its concern to be disassociated from anything resembling a professional body. In the 1942 March issue of Keystone a ballot was held to choose a new name as AASTA was deemed a "dim and cumbersome title".<sup>24</sup> It also suggested divisions and possible hierarchies by delineating the separate groups of Architects, Surveyors and Building Technicians. The result of the ballot was to give a two-thirds majority to the title ABT; standing for Association of Building Technicians. This new name was democratically decided upon and also dispensed with any reference to occupations associated with professionalism, and thus gave the group greater credibility in the context of the Trade Union and Labour movement.

In 1944, a 'Building Technicians' Charter' appeared<sup>25</sup> and declared

the intention "to enter on the stage of mature Trade Union work", and in 1945 ABT finally became affiliated to the NFBTO. As a Trade Union of architects, ABT members must have been disappointed with their involvement at the first post-war TUC conference (which K. Campbell attended), as housing was not even on the agenda.<sup>26</sup> Despite its marginal role within the broader context of the Trade Union movement, ABT saw that such an alliance could be of great use in their struggle for the recognition of the status of public and salaried architects. It also realised that the only possible way of effectively opposing RIBA was to become a much larger and representative body. Its membership in 1939 had been only c. 800 members, but with the help of a recruitment drive, and by exploiting the general radicalisation of younger architects during and after the war, it managed to raise its membership to c. 3,000 in 1945.<sup>27</sup> This was about a quarter of that of RIBA's membership. However ABT's main problems lay in convincing many architects to see themselves as workers who should be directly involved in Trade Union activity. Although the President and Council Members formed a hard core of mainly Communist members or sympathisers, who had little difficulty in agreeing and drawing up radical policies, it was quite another problem to get what was still a predominantly middle class membership and readership to understand and accept such ideas. These problems are considered and neatly summed up in an article by R.C. Tickell, entitled 'Are we Militant?'.<sup>28</sup> Tickell noted that ex-servicemen were returning to Britain in militant mood, and that they were:

bringing this new militancy into the Association. I say 'new' to contrast it with the old. The 'old' militancy was the one that wore the red tie, figuratively, if not literally. And it is the old that must learn to accommodate itself to the new. The militancy of the new members demand an association that is a union, not a left wing body often unhappily and precariously balanced with one foot in the Labour party and the other amongst the Communists.... Not that I am

attacking the CP.-ers, Cryptos, fellow-travellers, call then what you will. In many cases they represent the salt of the Association. Having been in the union longer than most I am only too aware of what the ABT owes them. It is they who held the organisation together when its lack of numbers made it economically impotent.... The straw vote on the political levies showed clearly that a great percentage were not even prepared to become 6d a month members of the Labour Party. They are at the moment inside the union primarily with one aim, to obtain higher salaries and better conditions. To induce them to follow into more progressive channels he must first meet this demand....

This was a very perceptive analysis of the problems of the ABT. These problems became increasingly acute as the ideological climate changed in the 1950s; the immediate post-war swing to the left, with its collectivist ideology, was gradually eroded. The increasing hostility to communism also made ABT's Marxist position more and more untenable for many of its members. The case for an acceptable argument for joining ABT had to be made. This was in the form of a summary of a talk given by K. Campbell at the London Branch of ABT, which was printed in Keystone.<sup>29</sup> Campbell started by outlining what he considered to be the two most important reasons given for not joining the ABT:

the architect, approached to join, says: 'I am an artist, an individual artist, the creator of a building, you are asking me to join a body in which I shall be only one amongst other technicians, surveyors and engineers, who have a different approach to building from mine. As a professional man you are asking me to join an Association which is linked to the Trade Union movement, to associations of working men, even to organisations of workers in the building industry, whom I suspect to be political and political is a way of which I do not approve' and he refuses with a shudder.

Campbell's answer to this was to first use a brief historical analysis to show that it was a 19th-century phenomenon to divide building activity up into separate functions and professions. Inigo Jones and Wren are cited as examples of architect/builder/engineers working for private patrons as well as the state. Campbell argued that architects must once more become part of a building team, as via collaboration it would be easier for

architects' voices to be heard in the struggle to obtain the "status and conditions in public offices which will enable him to make his full contribution to society". From a collaboration within a building team the argument continued that it was necessary to group together in institutions or unions, both of which aim to protect the livelihood of their members and maintain the standards of their skills. The advantage of a union was however that it was part of the larger Trade Union movement, and as a group affiliated to this movement "architects [would] carry a far heavier armament in their struggle". Campbell attempted to make this appear a safe option by stating that unions in most cases take part in political action to improve their members lot only "with extreme reluctance", and that this is a separate function. Therefore the:

affiliation of the ABT to the TUC enables the Association to draw upon this experience and power without in any way involving itself in the separate activities of the Congress as regards politics. Indeed the ABT, having no political levy and no strike fund and being in no way subject to any undertakings or agreements of, for instance, the building unions, has all the advantages of independence in this direction.

Despite the reasonable, almost depoliticised nature of Campbell's argument, it was ineffectual and too late. Conditions by the mid 1950s had changed: building license restrictions were lifted and more private work became available. Architects by the later 1950s were leaving public offices to start up private practices in the favourable conditions created by the buoyant economy. ABT therefore never really became a viable alternative to RIBA, and remained a marginal group that only reflected the interests of a small left wing section of the profession. It did however, constantly encourage criticism and debate of both RIBA and government policy and had some localised success. London especially was an area that supported a lot of ABT activity, and for several years

there was a separate LCC branch, which in 1949 had 60-100 members. This group organised talks; J.M. Hirsch gave a talk on Le Corbusier's Unité<sup>30</sup> and R.F. Jordan talked on the links between Trade Unionism and architectural design.<sup>31</sup>

ABT also participated in discussions for a new pay-scale that the Architects' Journal had initiated in 1952. In the article 'ABT and AJ. The status and salaries of Architects',<sup>32</sup> F.E. Shrosbree, the General Secretary of ABT, argued the case for ABT being the appropriate body to represent salaried architects, and asks them to join. This debate continued into the next year; an anonymous local authority architect in an article in the AJ<sup>33</sup> proposed a new salary scale, as the existing salaries were "unjustly small". He suggested that salaried architects were paid 38% less than the commercial value of their work. One of the responses to this article was from Cleeve Barr,<sup>34</sup> an ABT member who considered that the ABT was a suitable body to negotiate for them but thought that it would be advisable to form a specific salaried architects section within ABT, rather than as the article suggested, a new 'Salaried Architects Association'. This again illustrated the ineffectual nature of ABT in gaining popular support as many architects felt that it was too political and that a new association was needed.

(iii) Architects and left wing activity. The rise, and by the mid 1950s, the fall in the fortunes of ABT, parallels the history of communist activity within the middle classes. The difficulty in obtaining detailed information of particular architects involvement in Communist Party or left wing politics in the immediate post-war period (several architects interviewed were very wary about disclosing details concerning their early political activities due to the adverse effect this could have on

their architectural careers in the 1980s) makes it difficult to make more than a few general points. The middle years of the 1930s saw a spreading out of communist activity into new areas, especially within middle class professions, in order to create a united front of intellectuals, cultural workers and the working class.<sup>35</sup> The radicalisation of architects in the mid 1930s, with many joining the Communist Party, is seen in the student unrest at the Architectural Association, the formation of the Architects' and Technicians' Organisation (ATO), the revitalisation of AASTA and the campaign over Air Raid Precautions (ARP). This pre-war radicalisation was given further impetus by the war experience, which was seen as a general 'fight against facism', and as a transformatory experience for many architects who returned as politicised, militant ex-servicemen. In the immediate post-war years the Communist Party Architects Group was reformed in 1948 and had about 100-120 members, most of whom were London based. The Architectural Association also had a large Communist Party branch and left wing and Communist Party ex-students returned to lecture there in the 1940s and 1950s.<sup>36</sup>

The political activities at the Architectural Association in particular, came under attack in 1950. The issue was first publicly raised in a letter and editorial comment in The Builder.<sup>37</sup> Winston Walker wrote to the editor of The Builder after attending a presidential address at the Architectural Association, where he asked the President to "take a further arrow and aim it at the number of Communists gathered around the Architectural Association school. The only hope which Communists could have of success was to build on the wreckage of a democratic idea". He also took the opportunity to implicate the ABT:

I noted too the recurrence of certain names well known for their political views who, by means of the block voting system of the ABT -

an Association the political views of which are equally well known - had found their way onto various professional Institutes. It was at these cliques that I advised the President to aim his arrows, not because of their political views but rather because they allowed those views to cloud the vision of pure aesthetism, without which the work of the Architectural Association school would deteriorate.

The editorial leader, 'Architecture and Politics', developed Walker's theme and made the criticism more specific. Whilst allowing for students to have political and religious groups, the editor thought that:

the presence of Communists or fellow travellers on a teaching staff would, however, be regarded by most people as a different matter. Unlike other political creeds, Communism seeks to overthrow the constitution and its adherents are pledged to spread the creed; the governing body of any teaching establishment having in its charge the education of young men and women has a duty to ensure ... that they are not taught in an atmosphere in which politics and especially Communism, could be admixed with general or technical learning.

The solution the editorial leader suggested was indicative of the growing conservative and reactionary response of the establishment in 1950. It stated:

that the best answer to Communism, or any other "ism", is to bring young and inquiring minds into contact with people who exemplify the British way of life at its richest and best, and one step ... would be to review the policy of the school and decide whether it is going to pursue the aim of an internationalism in architectural design or revert, as many members would like to see it, to being a school of British architecture, staffed as a natural consequence by British architects.

Responses to this appeared in the following two issues of The Builder.<sup>38</sup> S.E.T. Cusdin, President of the Architectural Association replied that he had complete confidence in its staff and that it would continue to "appoint staff and enrol students irrespective of their religions or political beliefs or of their nationality". R.F. Jordan, Principal of the Architectural Association School of Architecture replied in order to put the:



facts straight, [and] to satisfy the natural curiosity of your readers... I can say that there are over thirty men on the Architectural Association staff and that two (possibly three...) are supporters of the Communist cause, a percentage probably comparable to that in most universities and institutions of higher learning. The Architectural Association although officially and strictly non-political, may try to be "progressive" ... and has probably had, ever since 1847, its fair share of radicals of various kinds. That we would all admit, but please keep your head!

The desire for a political censoring of teaching staff at the Architectural Association was voiced by one correspondent who wrote:

The fact that the Government and certain of the trade unions have removed Communists from occupying senior positions in the Civil Service and their organisations, and that now the County Councils of London, Middlesex, Kent and Essex have taken up this matter, should be enough to justify the inquiries, and if found necessary, a "clean-up" in schools and universities where architecture and also town planning are taught... In conclusion, I would point out that one of the reasons for the success of the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris was the fact that students were forbidden to introduce or take part in discussions on religion, nationality or politics.

This issue of the political nature of the Architectural Association's teaching in 1950 was an early example of a reaction against the immediate post-war shift to the political left. By the mid to late 1950s an organized Communist Party architects presence had come to an end. Radicalisation of architectural students dropped off quickly after the immediate post-war period, the increasing political censorship had a great impact, the popularity and support for ABT declined, the Communist Party Architects group collapsed in the wake of 1956 and there was a general movement out of public authority departments by Communist Party (but mostly ex-Communist Party) architects in the late 1950s and 1960s.<sup>40</sup>

### Architectural Theory.

(1) Definitions of Style. The debates within architecture in the 1930s

also led to a reappraisal of architectural theory. The view that architecture was an activity of pure aestheticism, in which universal laws of beauty and harmony were sought, were further brought into question. Architecture was no longer defined purely as an ahistorical and autonomous formal activity, although these views were still held by some. For example, W. Walker, (already quoted in his letter concerning the politics of the Architectural Association) did not tolerate the new thinking as:

reflected in the extract from the writings of J.M. Richards... that 'architecture is the work of those people who understand that architecture is a social art related to the lives of the people...' This is fallacious thinking; architecture always<sup>41</sup> has been and must remain above all this an Art, else it is nothing.

However the views of J.M. Richards and others like J. Summerson, who saw architecture as a social art, were the dominant one. This shift in theoretical thinking owed a lot to the influx of European emigre historians, e.g., Pevsner, Gombrich, Wittkower, and the Warburg Institute, who brought with them a German Idealist tradition which replaced the British Empirical tradition. It also in effect established the new discipline of Art History which R. Banham saw as being a crucial input of the 1950s "into progressive English architectural thought, into teaching methods, into the common language of communication between architects and between architectural critics".<sup>42</sup> This mode of thinking was predominantly an Hegelian one,<sup>43</sup> and the main concepts pillaged from it were a secularised 'Zeitgeist' or 'Spirit of the Age'.

In J.M. Richard's Introduction to Modern architecture, (already quoted) architecture is described as a "Social art related to the life of the people it serves, not an academic exercise in applied ornament".<sup>44</sup> He uses the architecture of the 18th century as the last instance of a

society that expressed itself through a uniform architectural style.

Their buildings were:

the anonymous products of a uniform architectural language such as we need today more than anything else. For the individual genius is a law to himself in any period; it is quality in the mass of building that makes an age of civilised architecture.

He continued:

in the 18th century this quality of consistency was closely bound up into the social structure. The educated class was a small one numerically, but it was still the ruling class and took an active interest in architecture. There was therefore only one source of style, only one mould of fashion. The uniform patterns of architecture... was handed down from the aristocratic patron and the private architect... to every builder and small provincial architect, who educated themselves in the rules prescribed from above with the aid of the innumerable books,<sup>45</sup>

This shows Richards to be mixing an Hegelian notion of a 'Spirit of the Age' which is reflected in its architecture, with a Marxist concept of class. By placing value on 'uniformity', Richards chose to ignore the problem of a dominant class imposing its taste upon subordinate classes, and failed to develop this Marxist concept any further in his analysis. Indeed, when discussing the 20th century he only refers to new technology and new social habits; that is a general spirit of the age. He does not identify explicitly any political transformations that were bringing about this new 20th-century 'spirit of the age'.

This incompatible mixture of Hegelian and Marxist concepts is a common feature of much architectural theory and writing of the period. J. Summerson is another writer who used both, developing Richards' argument further and in a more consistent way. In his essay 'The Mischievous Analogy' he observes that "there is a drastic flattening out of society, a reduction to uniformity in opportunity and reward based on

an old conception of social justice which is only now beginning to beget its full realisation".<sup>46</sup> This collectivism is seen to abolish the need for monumental architecture as it is "no longer required to give symbolic cohesion to society".<sup>47</sup> In another essay he states this more clearly:

great architecture of the past has often been the instrument and symbol of a class - the baron, the ecclesiastic, or the great landlord, parading his consequences before his compeers and before the people. The architecture of today must be the architecture not of a class but of the community itself.<sup>48</sup>

This methodology, although inspired by Marxist theory and rhetoric, obviously isn't Marxist. It is a general left wing view, that assumes that political and social transformations have already taken place. This therefore allows the Hegelian 'Spirit of the Age' concept to remain, and act as a basis for a definition of 'style'. Summerson goes even further away from contemporary Marxist theory by placing emphasis upon the rôle of the individual. He owns up to this in a footnote:

I know that this... runs contrary to the now fashionable opinion that great men are the product of their age and environment. Controversy on the point should be left to those who believe that any one interpretation of history can enclose all historical truth.<sup>49</sup>

This is obviously a backhander to those Marxist theorists with whom Summerson is in disagreement. What we are left with is a kind of left wing Humanism, rather loosely defined and not very well theorised. Thus architectural change occurs as the result of the effects of men of genius. Their architecture reflects the needs and ideas of their society and is not merely a result of pure functionalism or mere architectural aestheticism. In the mid 20th century, society had reached a state of equality, hence monumental architecture was no longer required. Within this democratic society the home becomes the chief focus for architectural creation, and this should relate to the human scale.<sup>50</sup>

This architectural theory held by both Richards and Summerson had great currency, and was disseminated both through their essays and books, and also through the AR, of which Richards was editor in the 1940s and 1950s.

A second, and equally important definition of 'style' was also imported from abroad in the 1930s through the same Art Historical channels. This was a Marxist analysis which identified 'styles' with the interests of specific classes within society. These early Marxist cultural theories, which relied upon Marx's analysis of society in terms of an 'economic base' and a 'superstructure' were unsophisticated and reductionist. They proposed a direct unidirectional influence from the economic base upwards into the ideological and cultural activities of the superstructure. Hence a dominant class in control of the economic base was seen to express itself directly in the superstructure by a distinct set of ideologies and also visual 'styles'. The co-existence of more than one style in any period suggested the older style as representing the class in decline, and the newer style as representing the new emergent and ascendant class. The key Art Historical example of the use of this type of Marxist analysis was F. Antal's Florentine Painting and its Social Background, which was written between 1932-38, but not published until 1948.<sup>51</sup> In this text Antal charted the rise of a new middle class in Florence in the late 14th and early 15th centuries, whose attitudes and beliefs were seen to correspond to the new naturalistic style of Masaccio. This contrasted to the courtly late-Gothic style of Gentile da Fabriano's art, which was seen to correspond to the declining aristocratic class. Also in Antal's approach, the ideologies embodied in the work were not defined by the interests or class position of the artist, but the 'world-views' of the different sections of society which

formed the patrons and audience for the art.<sup>52</sup> Antal's model for the analysis of style therefore went considerably further than the secularised Hegelian model of Richards and Summerson. It allowed for a society divided into classes with opposing interests. The notion of the 'Spirit of the Age' therefore became far more precisely articulated into a 'Spirit of a Dominant Class'. This, coupled with Marx's use of Hegel's dialectics, reformulated into the concept of 'historical materialism', provided a much more powerful analytical model with which to study the development of new architectural styles. 'Style' therefore became a cultural expression of the history of 'class struggle'.

This Marxist analysis became the main theoretical framework for much of ABT's critical writing. An example of this is A. Boyd's review of a symposium in 1949 on 'The Kind of Architecture we want in Britain',<sup>53</sup> He concluded that:

there are great ideas, great social forces in the world today, and I personally believe that we shall get a great architecture in England only when the working class is dominant, when the state and society are moulded by the great ideas of socialism, and when architecture is inspired by the conscious aim to celebrate and inspire the achievements of the people...

Boyd was also joint editor, with Colin Penn, of ABT's publication Homes for the People,<sup>54</sup> in which this analytical model is applied to an analysis of the Modern Movement. They comment on modern architecture of the inter-war years that "instead of ending the chaos of 'styles' and laying the foundations, in straightforward and scientific building, of a single future new tradition, its actual effect has too often been to provide just one more style...". That is, it "became a pattern book of forms. It became a fashion; and fashions, though exciting at first, soon grow stale".<sup>55</sup>

They saw this as being due not only to the society and culture of the times but also to the Movement itself as:

- (i) the works of the most gifted were highly stylised and expressed an over developed aesthetic sense,
- (ii) these aesthetic ideas were limited, abstract and formal, and not deeply satisfying or human ones,
- (iii) the idolising of machine production didn't fit the real situation of the building industry,
- (iv) the movement was too much an affair of aesthetes and experts and not enough the affair of ordinary people, and most of the work was for rich private clients.

They therefore concluded that:

It takes more than a few groups of intellectuals, more or less isolated from the mass of the people, to bring about a renaissance today. Nothing less than the renewal of the whole of our culture is involved and in this the public must take a major role - an active, not a passive one. Every great age of building has been based on an informed and critical public. Sometimes this public has been the small circle of an educated ruling class. In a democratic age nothing less than the whole people will do.

Thus modern architecture as a compact and conscious movement, as a sort of cult, has largely spent its force, but its contribution has been of lasting value. The basic principles it sought to put into practice are mostly true and still need to be put into practice. Only the younger and progressive architects are now likely to adopt an attitude less startling and less doctrinaire. They will not give up the duty of guiding the public, but they will study and consult them too<sup>56</sup>.

This critique of the Modern Movement by the use of the Marxist model for style is essential for an understanding of the development of some of the post-war positions as regards an appropriate 'style' for reconstruction. It introduces the concept that a new socialist style must come from a direct expression of the culture, interests, and ideologies of the working classes (sometimes referred to as 'the masses',

'the people' or 'democratic society', depending on context). It also suggests that the inter-war years Modern Movement aesthetic was not a 'style' of the masses, but rather one of a small group of intellectuals. The concept of 'Vanguardism', in its crudest form, is therefore considered by these critics to be an unacceptable model for stylistic development. A. Ling in a series of articles on Soviet Architecture spells this out clearly:

Here in England we are sometimes inclined to fool ourselves that, because a handful of architects and rich clients between them produce a few precious buildings in the 'international' idiom, we have a modern architecture. We forget that the style of architecture approved by the masses of the people in this country is no better than that demanded by the masses of Russians. The difference is that while here the dictation of taste, where the more costly buildings are concerned, is in the hands of the few, in the Soviet Union it is deliberately committed to the hands of the people...

and

Some of us here in England are inclined to think that our 'modern' style of architecture represents the true equivalent of Socialistic progress. This may or may not be, but what is certain is that you cannot impose it at once, even on a people who have accepted Socialism in practice. You cannot begin to have a 'socialist' style until you have a complete socialist system.

Modern architecture for these critics therefore became merely a transitional style, a kind of 'Loosian' clearing away of ornament, and a cleansing of Capitalist architecture. This was seen to be necessary before a new style derived from consultation with the masses could be developed.

These two analytical models for 'style', derived from contemporary developments in the new Art History, formed an important basis for the architectural polemics of the post-war years. It should be noted that in some instances it is difficult to differentiate between which model has



been used, as for example in the already cited cases of Richards and Summerson, who mix both an Hegelian and a Marxist model within the same argument. This confusion of methodological approach, which tends to reduce, by generalisation and reduction of the argument, these two models to one overall definition of architectural style, (in which style is broadly related to social and economic factors), has a political basis. The Summerson and Richards model, adapted by the AR in its definition of the 'New-Empiricism' (see later discussion) can be seen as a politically emasculated version of the Marxist model adapted by the Communist dominated ABT group. Summerson and Richard's argument for the championing of Modern Movement architecture, and its new social rôle, is therefore not as radical as it first appears. It neatly side steps any direct and explicit discussion of political activity and is thus virtually totally depoliticised. It is significant that the quote at the beginning of this section, in which Summerson described the split personality of the architect, he mentioned contemporary life, scientific research, sociology, psychology and engineering, but not politics.

However for some, these theoretical developments were still too intellectually advanced. One such observer was Ian S. Menzies, a young Conservative, who wrote a semi-humorous rejoinder to The Builder complaining of this kind of stylistic theorising. He wrote:

Hitherto, when reading Soviet charges against their own composers of writing 'bourgeois' music or suchlike pleasantries, I had felt very superior and Western and politically educated, and marvelled at such crude Communist folly. It had never occurred to me that a body of educated British people in responsible positions [he refers to teachers at the Architectural Association School of Architecture] would imply that there could be such a thing as Communistic architecture! Perhaps my unprofessional eye has missed it, but could it be that there are buildings showing a Labour style, or perhaps a Titoist deviation in the basement, or Conservative elevations with a Liberal facade, and why not an Irish Anti-Partitionist architecture<sup>59</sup>?

Even if Menzies was incapable of accepting connections between ideologies and visual 'styles', the majority of informed and progressive young architects in the post-war period were considering just these problems.

(ii) Post-war architectural groups. In his two seminal essays 'Revenge of the Picturesque: English Architectural Polemics, 1945-65',<sup>60</sup> and 'The New Brutalism',<sup>61</sup> Reyner Banham analyses these debates on style within the major groupings of London's architectural circles in the post-war period. He blames the influence of the new art history, with its historicist tendencies, of reducing these architectural debates and positions into three main-isms or groups; that of the "New Empiricism", the "New Humanism" and the "New Brutalism". Despite this historicist reduction of a fluid and complex set of groupings, ideologies, political commitments etc. into merely <sup>three</sup> distinct labels, it is nonetheless convenient to re-use these divisions to structure this discussion on post-war architectural polemics and to underline different theoretical positions.

Banham defined them as:

New Empiricism - the Architectural Review's post-war 'trouvaille', ...a term which was intended to describe visible tendencies in Scandinavian architecture to distinguish it from another historical concept 'The International Style'.<sup>62</sup>

New Humanism; a phrase which means something different in Marxist hands to the meaning which might be expected. The New Humanism meant, in architecture at that time, brickwork, segmental arches, pitched roofs, small windows (or small panes at any rate) - picturesque detailing without picturesque planning. It was, in fact, the so called 'William Morris Revival'.<sup>63</sup>

New Brutalism; It was in the beginning, [it is this early restricted useage that concerns the present discussion, its later transformation in the context of the Smithsons and later 1950s architectural debates is not relevant] a term of Communist abuse, and it was intended to

signify the normal vocabulary of Modern Architecture - flat roofs, glass, exposed structure - considered as morally reprehensible deviation from the 'New Humanism'. [And among this] non-Marxist grouping there was no particular unity of programme or intention, but there was a certain community of interests, a tendency to look toward Le Corbusier, and to be aware of something called 'le beton brut'.<sup>64</sup>

These three 'isms' were grouped politically into two factions, "the Communists versus the Rest". The Communist New Humanism grouping was in Banham's terminology: "an 'ism' like Futurism, a banner, a slogan, a policy consciously adopted by a group of artists, whatever their apparent similarity or dissimilarity of their products",<sup>65</sup>. It was therefore more of a political grouping rather than an aesthetic one. The central aesthetic dilemma for the group was what aesthetic to adopt to represent the transitional stage before a full socialist Britain became a reality.

One option was to look back to earlier British precedents, especially those of Ruskin, William Morris and Pugin.<sup>66</sup> These were revered as they had all, in different ways, associated architecture and design with politics. Morris, especially became an obvious rôle model to follow, indeed a revival of interest in the writings of Morris had started in the 1930s.<sup>67</sup> In Morris, they could read that architecture was:

above all an art of association... the true democratic art, the child of the man-inhabited earth, the expression of the life of man thereon... that which springs direct from popular impulse, from the partnership of all men... of each one of us, who must keep watch and ward over the fairness of the earth.

Morris also singled out Gothic architecture as a style that represented the positive aspects of fellowship and craftsmanship joined in a collaborative effort: "...from the first, the tendency was towards... freedom of hand and mind subordinated to the co-operative harmony which made the freedom possible. This is the spirit of Gothic

Architecture".<sup>69</sup> However, the William Morris Revival that Banham refers to, which was expressed architecturally by "brickwork, segmental arches, pitched roofs and small windows", was a rather general return to 19th and early 20th century vernacular housing traditions. Its specific stylistic sources and origins were less important than it being seen as a complete contrast to recent modern architectural attitudes. As will be seen in the discussion of LCC housing, it was also a very problematic aesthetic to try and build in the context of post second world war Britain. Such picturesque architectural detailing (even if achieved, as in the 19th-Gothic revival, with the use of machine produced components) was far too expensive to fit within the tight restraints imposed by the inflationary building costs of the post-war years.

Another alternative was to look toward Russia, which in the late 1930s onwards meant a classical style of Socialist Realism. The debate on Russian Socialist Realism raised many issues, and these debates formed the basis of much of the theoretical framework of the New Humanist Group. In fact Russia became a model for both an architectural style as well as for a political, social and professional structure.

The third option considered by this group was the architecture of Socialist Sweden, which had since the early 1930s been developing a Welfare State and building mixed development state housing schemes. Some confusion was generated by the fact that it was not only the Communist 'New Humanist' group that looked towards Sweden. As already stated, the AR's 'New Empiricism' was also using Swedish architecture (for slightly different purposes) as a model. The 'New Humanist' grouping therefore covered a wide variety of aesthetic possibilities, some of which were shared by other groups. It is therefore their political and theoretical

position that most clearly defines them and sets them apart from other groups.

The 'Rest', the 'New Empiricists' and the 'New Brutalists' were groups or 'isms', which, again in Banham's terminology, were isms like "Cubism (which was) a label, a recognition tag, applied by critics and historians to a body of work which appears to have certain consistent principles running through it, whatever the relationship of the artists".<sup>70</sup> The New Empiricist and New-Brutalist groupings were less clearly defined by a consistent theoretical or philosophical basis. Rather, they were only coherent groups in that they were each seen to adopt certain formal interests. The New Empiricism, as defined by the AR was concerned with traditional domestic detailing and a picturesque approach to planning (seen in the AR's 'Townscape' ideas, and in Richards' The Castles on the ground, The Anatomy of Suburbia<sup>71</sup>). This set them apart from the New Brutalists who held with the rational and classical elements of the Modern Movement, especially of the inter-war work of Le Corbusier. These two groups became more distinct and polarised after the debate concerning the picturesque versus classical traditions of British architecture were initiated by Richards and Pevsner.<sup>72</sup>

#### The development of paradigms for reconstruction.

It is therefore apparent that in the immediate post-war years the architectural debates of these three groupings, the New Humanists, the New Empiricists, and the New Brutalists revolved around their use and development of three main models for an architectural style suitable for the reconstruction of post-war Britain (the fourth, the so called

'William Morris Revival', was never clearly articulated or developed in the subsequent architectural debates). These were:

- (i) an International Modern Movement, dominated by the work and ideas of Le Corbusier,
- (ii) the building work of Sweden since the formation of a socialist Welfare State and,
- (iii) the example of post-revolutionary Russia, especially the Socialist Realism of the 1930s onwards.

These three models, acted as pre-existing paradigms

for possible ways forward for post-war architecture in Britain. These three paradigms were clearly defined and established by the late 1940s through numerous and extensive articles, books, debates etc.

(1) Paradigm I: Le Corbusier and the International Modern Movement. The influence of Modern Movement architecture and theory was vast, ranging from its use as a general image for a free and democratic (not necessarily socialist) society to very specific influences and connections of key buildings and architects. The former can be illustrated by Summerson's use of the binary opposition of Modern architecture to Fascism:

Hitler hates flat roofs... It stands for the bitter hatred of perverse and unteachable men for the pattern of life which is everywhere emerging out of the old... But the trouble where Hitler is concerned is that the flat roof, the continuous horizontal window, the long unpillared span all coalesce under the sanction of a new philosophy of architecture, a philosophy identified with scientific thought which is, in its very essence, anti-fascist and which Hitler intensely dislikes.

This theme is also suggested by Richards, who says of Modern architects that "they are not, as their detractors often suggest,

'Bolshies' or stunt-mongers".<sup>74</sup> However, for the purposes of this argument it is the more specific influence of the work of Le Corbusier, in particular his 'Unité d'Habitation', Marseille, and his 'Modulor' theory, that is relevant.

Le Corbusier was undoubtedly the most important architectural personality in the pre- and post-war years. His buildings were widely known through articles in journals and the publication of the oeuvre complète by W. Boesiger. His theoretical writings were also well known, especially through F. Etchells' translations of Vers Une Architecture in 1927 (reprinted in 1946), and Urbanisme in 1929 (reprinted in 1947). Le Corbusier himself, also popularised his work by visits and lectures in London on a couple of occasions, which are discussed later. However, despite this plethora of material and exposure to Le Corbusier's work, it is surprising how uncritical much of the response was. An example of this is J. Summerson's lecture at the Warburg Institute entitled 'The 'Poetry' of Le Corbusier'.<sup>75</sup>

Summerson's main thesis is to attack the notion of Le Corbusier as merely a rationalist, or 'Functionalist' architect. He suggests that such 'Functionalist' phrases as the house as a 'machine à habiter', were not theoretically or practically followed through, and that Le Corbusier's work was primarily concerned with aesthetic choice. Summerson suggests links with Cubism, but warns:

I can see some horrid textbook of the future saying: 'Le Corbusier's planning was much influenced by the drawings of Pablo Picasso' - which is sheer nonsense. That comparison I gave was merely a pointer reading. Behind it is the new outlook of modern painters - the new emotional pattern made by their observations of the world. These Le Corbusier shares; it is these which make his buildings what they are.<sup>76</sup>

He concludes that:

these relationships with poetry and painting seem to me to show pretty clearly what the 'romanticism' of Le Corbusier means. [He therefore formed] a new unity - as the resultant of many converging forces, which, until his arrival, no man was big enough to grasp all at once... [and] one can only compare [this] with, say, Michaelangelo's inauguration of the Baroque... [and] in both cases you have a man with a strongly poetic imagination, who is a painter, entering the field of architecture and setting a new direction.

This lecture is interesting on two counts. First it illustrates, again, Summerson's art historical methodology (it was appropriate that the lecture was held at the Warburg Institute). He can be seen to be using the two concepts of the 'Spirit of the Age' and the artist/architect as genius/innovator. Secondly it illustrates the total 'formal' bias of the analysis of Le Corbusier's work, which characterises most of the critical debates on his work. Two other examples will suffice to reinforce this point. First L. Brett's article "The space machine - an evaluation of the recent work of Le Corbusier",<sup>78</sup> which reviews the 1938-46 Oeuvre complète. Brett opens on a critical note:

It remains a puzzle... how these carelessly assembled picture books, with their impudent doodlings, their pretentious but half-baked 'esquisses', and their tantalising omissions, have leapt the barriers of language and become the students bible from Helsinki to Rio.

However Brett then immediately justifies Le Corbusier's position as leader of the revolutionary party, and concludes that "when all is said Le Corbusier's greatness remains absolutely unimpaired by the kind of holes I have picked in his latest book".<sup>80</sup> The holes Brett picked were all minor formal or practical ones. His analysis of the plans for the 'Unité d'habitation de grandeur conforme' (plate 1) made no reference to its conception of society, nor how it could be used as a model for mass housing. Instead he demurs: "criticism becomes mainly a job for the



sociologist", and "once again, the critic is more or less bludgeoned into silence".

The second example is C. Rowe's article, again in the AR, "The Mathematics of the Ideal Villa".<sup>81</sup> The purpose of this article was to point to Le Corbusier's classicising tendencies by comparing his villas (and his use of mathematical systems to control his designs) to those of Palladio. The aim was to highlight the rational basis of Le Corbusier's work, which Summerson's lecture, already cited, had done much to undermine. The analyses of Le Corbusier's villas by Rowe are made from a purely 'formal' and abstract perspective, and the whole discussion only operated within the limited context of the 'Classical' versus 'Romantic' debate on the Modern Movement. This is therefore another example of the influence of the new art history on architectural criticism of the 1940s.

The important point to stress is therefore the very limited nature of the criticism of Le Corbusier's work. His building and theoretical writings were rarely treated to anything other than either adulation or formal analysis. The relationship of his buildings and theories to contemporary society and politics were not made. In fact M. McLeod's thesis 'Urbanism and Utopia' of 1985,<sup>82</sup> is really the first critical analysis to adequately attempt this. McLeod locates Le Corbusier's work within the context of an interest in Taylorism in the 1920s and Regional Syndicalism of the 1930s and 1940s. Her assessment of Le Corbusier's work of the 1930s sees it as being influenced by the doctrine of Syndicalism, which unlike Marxism, thought that revolutionary change and architectural change could occur simultaneously. That is revolution did not result from historically created conditions of class struggle but through the practical implementation of a new vision of society.

Therefore she states that, "Instead of critically examining the existing class structure and economic conditions Le Corbusier offered poésie to bring about 'the revolt of human consciousness'".

Le Corbusier's own desire for Universality also contributed to the general confusion over his ideas. His style of rhetoric at times defies, or at least inhibits, critical analysis. He sees himself as a 'Zarathustran' figure, dispensing thoughts and statements to a bewildered architectural audience. His introduction to the 1938-1946 Oeuvre complète is typical of this attitude; he declares:

Life calls the poets as the time needs them. If they gather round the word Liberty, they have to light up the daily fruit of the newly found freedom: And those are the great enterprises which our hands still hesitate to grasp... There are ruins, stones overthrown or frustrated ideas. The universal forge is in full work. Give it programs. Work! <sup>83</sup> Create the tools of happiness - the equipment of the modern world.

This florid and overblown writing style was that of the artist's manifesto of the 1920s, and despite its inappropriateness for the post-war situation, was still obviously attractive for architects and students who willingly became 'disciples' of this gargantuan prophet-like figure. The optimism, enthusiasm and importantly the non-political (but at the same time apparently socialist or democratic) sound of all this must have been very alluring to architects lacking a clearly defined political ideology.

The Modulor Theory and the designs for the Unité d'Habitation in Marseille were well documented and published.<sup>84</sup> However another important means of <sup>S</sup>dis<sub>A</sub>semination of these ideas (which were to be critical for the housing work of the LCC designed in Matthew's new housing department in the 1950s) was by two lectures given by Le Corbusier in

London. The first was at the Architectural Association in 1947 on the topic of the 'Golden Section'.<sup>85</sup> In true Corbusian style he told the students of modular ideas: "we have created what I call 'Modulor', which we will put at the disposal of all architects". This he compared to a musical scale. He also noted that "This method cannot give intelligence to idiots. It must be used with delicacy. And then with it you can attempt to give proportion, and the harmony of music, to architecture".

He went on to illustrate the use of 'Modulor' by discussing the designs for the Unité d'Habitation, Marseille (plate 2).

Now I am going to show you a very much larger building - the great building which we are constructing at Marseilles - and how the same golden module can control everything... Naturally there is green space all around. This immense construction on which 30 architects, engineers and administrators have worked for two and a half years completely obeys the golden rule of the proportions of modular... [the scale of proportion will show on] its four sides all the measurements used in the construction of the building from a millimetre to the largest of them. These things will be explained later in writing and then you will be able to see them better than I am able to demonstrate them now... [the dwelling unit] is the key to individual and comprehensive syntheses, and in this harmonious revolution, this binary equation individual and collective, architects can give modern society the solution for which it is waiting - happiness in the home and social strength in its development, permitting the phenomena of participation which are the very condition of joy, and enabling us to expel the egoism which destroys individuals and peoples... already a modern conscience has appeared everywhere and thus reformation of modern understanding is made manifest by architecture. You are going to see the whole built-up domain of the world and of each country transformed during the years to come... The great moment is coming when architecture will forsake mighty cornices, and concern itself with the good of man in his dwelling, the homes of families, houses for work, for things, for institutions and for gods.

There could have been no better rallying call than this, a presentation by Le Corbusier himself of his post-war position which stressed the Unité as a culmination of his career. The undiluted Utopianism of this speech today seems extremely naive, but in the context of the post-war situation it must have been a high point in the

Architectural Association students' course. The challenge was quite definitely laid at the feet of the young Architectural Association students to go off and use the Unité and the modulator as the basis for their future work. This was exactly what they did. After graduating several of this generation of students, who were at the Architectural Association in 1947, became employed in the New Housing Division under Matthew at the LCC.

The second occasion Le Corbusier spoke on the Unité in London was at his presentation speech in 1953, when he was awarded the RIBA Royal Gold Medal.<sup>86</sup> He stated:

I was asked, 'Will you make a great building for these people?' and I replied, 'Yes, on one condition, that I am not to be bound by any rule'. They agreed, and so I started work on this building, which embodies a great many of my proposals for the modern town, the town of to-day. I was governed by the cosmic laws of space, by my respect and admiration for nature, by the needs of the family, and the recognition of the home as the fundamental unit of society and the hearth as the centre of the home... I have created something at Marseilles, as I realised when, on October 14 last, at 9 o'clock in the morning, I saw it completed and inhabited. There was a general agreement that it was magnificent, and I was the first to say so. I always had confidence that it would prove to be so, in spite of all the attacks that were made upon it, and on October 14 of last year I realised that here was a new achievement<sup>87</sup> not of an architect but of the constructive spirit of our time.

This speech helped considerably to promulgate the ideas of the Unité in London. One of the preliminary speeches at this award ceremony was given by R. Matthew, Chief Architect to the LCC. He reviewed Le Corbusier's achievement in town planning, as:

nothing less than a new affirmation of the Rights of Man, the Rights of Man in terms of sun, light, space, quiet, trees and grass... [and his town planning work] knitting together the technological possibilities of building with radical solutions... have for long now been recognised as a fundamental contribution to twentieth century town planning technique. Even some of the world's largest<sup>88</sup> bureaucracies have not been entirely impervious to these ideas.

It is therefore apparent that it was not only the young Architectural Association students who had been won over to Le Corbusier's Utopianism. Matthew's sympathetic response to Corbusian ideas was an essential factor in allowing similar experiments to be carried out at the LCC in the early 1950s, which was presumably one of the world's largest bureaucracies that he referred to in his speech.

Le Corbusier's Unité d'Habitation in Marseille therefore became a tremendously important paradigm for post-war housing. As a <sup>a</sup>paradigm its main features were that:

(i) it proposed a solution to all, and any, social and economic problems, without reference to politics. Le Corbusier claimed it could produce 'happiness in the home' and the 'very condition of joy'. That is it offered a complete argument for architectural determinism.<sup>89</sup>

(ii). The main architectural element that guaranteed this was the use of the Modulor system, which it was claimed produced a visual harmony, in turn producing a spiritual harmony.

(iii) The architect became a replacement for the politician, and a prophet-like figure who could help save mankind,

(iv) It offered a very exciting formal expression to this, in the form of a gigantic 17-storey slab block raised up on pilotis, and set in open landscape (plate 3).

The obvious advantage of this paradigm was that it could be easily stripped of its metaphysical elements, which then left it as a non-political 'style', the New-Brutalism. What is surprising is how little sensible criticism the Unité and Le Corbusier's theoretical ideas met with. One of the few examples is F.J. Osborn's two articles 'Concerning Le Corbusier',<sup>90</sup> in the Town and Country Planning Journal,

Osborn, a member of the Garden City Movement, was in disagreement with Le Corbusier's 'vertical garden city' ideas. However he does more than just disagree, and tries to cut through the propaganda and rhetoric to make a serious criticism. He comments that:

It is very much more difficult to fasten on the fallacies in Le Corbusier's philosophy because he does not even attempt to connect up the components that might go into it. But you don't have to have an absolutely water-tight philosophy to find a following and to leave a mark.

He notes Le Corbusier's interest in:

ways of living, social affairs, and economics - of which subjects he hardly shows a moderate amateur grasp. This would not handicap him as an artist, architect, or engineer if he confined himself to such specialisations. But it is disabling when it comes to prescribing the sort of city suitable for family life, industry trade, culture, and the other purposes of society.

He describes Le Corbusier's Unité as a "romantic 'mechanistic fantasy" whose motives were "merely aesthetic or indulgent of a childish mechanistic enthusiasm - the temptations of the architect or the engineer bored with the daily grind". He concluded that "L'Unité d'Habitation has nothing to do with a solution of the social housing problem or with the planned redevelopment of great cities". This critical assessment of Le Corbusier's Unité was not developed further in the context of broader architectural circles of the 1950s. This left the Le Corbusier paradigm as a tantalizing and apparently viable option for architects to try and emulate.

(ii) Paradigm II: Sweden. An awareness of Swedish architecture, especially State and Co-operative Housing Schemes, was gradually built up from the early 1940s onwards by visits of architects to Sweden, articles in journals, and the publication of books. Professor W. Holford was one

of the first architects to visit Sweden officially during the war in 1942. He gave a review of this trip in the RIBA Journal,<sup>91</sup> which was expanded into a lengthier illustrated article which then formed the basis of a 'Swedish' number of the AR in 1943.<sup>92</sup> Most of the key architects at the LCC had also by c. 1950 visited Sweden, either officially or on holiday. An ABT tour was organised in 1947<sup>93</sup> and reported in Keystone. Another tour for English architectural students took place in 1946, it included a lecture programme of ten lectures given by Swedish architects and organised by the National Association of Swedish Architects (SAR). The lectures were later published as a separate booklet in 1949.<sup>94</sup> SAR, and the Swedish Institute for Cultural Relations were both keen to develop contacts with British architects and encouraged an interest in Swedish architecture by regularly publishing leaflets etc. on recent building work (for example, SAR's publication Swedish Housing of the Forties, published in 1950<sup>95</sup>). Other general survey books appeared, such as G.E. Kidder Smith's Sweden Builds in 1950.<sup>96</sup> Whilst much of this material was of a non-critical nature, it did provide a wealth of photographs, plans and comments that presented an image of an highly organised and successful 'welfare state' building programme, carried out in a relatively consistent modern architectural style. For example B. Hultén's Building Modern Sweden<sup>97</sup> comprehensively illustrated a reconstructed welfare state Sweden. His first photograph shows the building technicians studying the plans (plate 4) for this reconstruction. This is followed by examples of neighbourhood planning (plate 5), mixed development estates (plate 6), and point blocks (plate 7). Smith's Sweden Builds also illustrated several examples of these new Swedish types of housing and planning. For example the Ribershus estate, Malmö (plate 8) with its multi-storey slab blocks of flats set in open

parkland, and the Remersholm estate, Stockholm (plate 9), with point blocks set on a sloping wooded site. Examples showing the types of detailing and use of materials of the Swedish housing of the 1940s included the Elfingården estate, Stockholm, by Backström and Rein ius (plate 10) and a view of terraced houses in Malmö (plate 11). The use of brick, tile and wood panelling for facing materials, and the use of large square and rectangular windows based on a simple geometric module, produced a clean and simple aesthetic. Although this appeared modern, it still retained references to earlier building traditions and emphasised the domestic scale and human quality of the buildings.

From an exposure to this mass of material, two distinct attitudes towards Swedish architecture and society developed. The first was a wholly positive one, that took the Swedish model of a welfare state and its new architectural expression in total, without criticism. This view is illustrated in B. Hultén's Building Modern Sweden,<sup>98</sup> a Penguin paperback publication that was intended as a popular and cheap book to be widely available, and not aimed at just a specialist architectural audience. The foreword was written by Sir Patrick Abercrombie, who gave an overview of Sweden's politics, society, and housing. He commented on Sweden's Democratic party policy which had produced "Modern Sweden with its programme of social welfare designed to give everyone a life of basic security and equality". This, he continued, meant in terms of housing, mixed development with communal facilities, and built by a building industry controlled since 1940 by local authorities. Abercrombie therefore pointed to Sweden's 'Mixed economy' and welfare state policies as a model for a socialist Britain to follow. The humanist element of this type of welfare state architecture is stated by Hultén in his introduction; "This book of pictures tries to show what good modern



Swedish architecture looks like and its connection with ordinary people in their daily life". This short book is therefore interesting as a piece of propaganda for putting forward the possibilities and advantages of a welfare state, mixed economy Britain, by citing 'moderate' Sweden as a model to follow.

The second attitude was a more critical look at Sweden's mixed-economy welfare state system. An example of this is seen in the catalogue of an exhibition on 'Modern Swedish Architecture' held at the Building Centre in 1952.<sup>99</sup> In this, Graeme Shankland, (an LCC architect and ABT member), reviews Swedish architecture and concluded:

Sweden and its architecture is sometimes criticised for being too smug, dull and too tidy. If it does not reach the heights and depths of Mediterranean architecture this is as much due to its political and social environment as to national character and geography; in Sweden the Capitalist Welfare State has developed in the most favourable circumstances that the system itself permits. Today there is a feeling of uncertainty, not least in architecture. For Sweden stands, as we do, between peace and war; between the advance of society and the development of national culture, and economic crisis and destruction. This exhibition shows the contribution of one nation to the arts of peace. May both our countries, in the spirit of human and civilised rivalry between nations, soon achieve even greater architecture, and the social progress that it will reflect.

Shankland with his Marxist perspective saw Sweden's 'capitalist welfare state', as only an interim stage. He therefore did not see it as a goal to aim for in the way that the more moderate socialist views of Abercrombie and Hultén did. Moreover his analysis suggests that this architectural style was not a suitable model for a more 'advanced' socialist society. He believed that only when a socialist state exists in Sweden or Britain would an "even greater architecture" be possible.

These two attitudes, which reflect two different political positions - one that accepts the idea of a capitalist welfare state or 'mixed

economy' as a viable socialist model for Britain, and one that looks for a more radical transformation of the British economy into a complete socialist state - were the basis for the use of Sweden as a paradigm by both the New Empiricist and the New Humanist groups respectively.

The Communist based 'New Humanist' group, although critical of Sweden's social structure, could still see it as one example of a European attempt at a move towards socialism. The ABT members on their tour of 1947 saw Sweden as an 'hygienic Utopia',<sup>100</sup> so at the very least they had a respect and an interest in the architectural work of Sweden. Given that the other aesthetic alternatives that interested them, i.e. Russian Socialist Realism with its classical detailing or the William Morris Revival with its elaborate detailing, would both be very expensive to build,<sup>101</sup> the Swedish style was at least a practical model that could be built. K. Campbell has stated that of those architects interested in Socialist Realism in the LCC Housing Department under Matthew and Martin, "they were by and large defeated - not by argument but by the fact that Socialist Realism designs couldn't be got within price limits! By and large they ended up in the Neo-Swedish camp".<sup>102</sup> Thus, almost by default, the Swedish paradigm became an alternative for the New Humanists.

The definition of a New Empiricist style was due to the AR's articles on Swedish architecture. The first AR review of Swedish architecture was in the form of a 'Special Swedish number of the AR' in September 1943.<sup>103</sup> It presented Swedish architecture of the late 1930s and war years as a development away from the narrow interests of 'Functionalism'. In Backström's article 'A Swede Looks at Sweden', he criticises 'Functionalism' and the 'new objectivity' for failing to

provide liveable homes. He states that the public "felt the lack of many of the aesthetic values and the little contributions to cosiness that we human beings are so dependent upon", and that the architects:

realised that one had to build for human beings as they are, and not as they ought to be... one result of this growing insight was a reaction against the all too schematic architecture of the 1930s. To-day we have reached the point where all the elusive psychological factors have again begun to engage our attention. Man and his habits, reactions and needs are the focus of interest as never before.<sup>104</sup>

This idea of Swedish architecture's humanist base was restated by H. Ahlberg in the introduction, where he stated "architecture should serve man and humanity".<sup>105</sup>

The central article was Prof. W. Holford's, 'The Swedish scene - an English architect in wartime Sweden'. Holford after his tour of Swedish housing with its 'trim and plain façades' was "left wondering whether the aesthetic perception of a new generation, brought up to such things as social security and a house for every family, will discover a harmony in this type of settlement to satisfy the eye as well as the mind...". This he believed to be possible in the future when the:

apprehension of the social value of standardised democratic housing, grouped by architect and site-planner into visible communities, will be so strong... [that it would give] an aesthetic satisfaction that at present we do not achieve.

This new collectivist aesthetic would be brought about in Sweden due to its democratic structure, where you could already find a social mix of various income groups in co-operative housing<sup>106</sup> and where there was "not much difference [externally] between working-class flats and luxury flats".<sup>107</sup>

This first Swedish issue of the AR therefore introduced a view of Swedish architecture as being humanist and equalitarian, where class or income differences were minimalised in architectural expression. This view of the rôle of modern architecture conforms to those of Richards, the editor, and represented the theoretical, aesthetic, social and political outlook of the AR in this period. This initial issue was followed up by two further articles on Swedish architecture.

The first was a short article, 'The New Empiricism-Sweden's latest style',<sup>108</sup> which developed and restated the argument of the first Swedish issue. Namely that the 1930s functionalist arguments were no longer valid, and that like Sweden, other countries were abandoning functionalist stereotypes. J.P. Oud, one of Functionalism's "most illustrious supporters", was cited as an example of an architect repudiating his earlier beliefs. The article stated: "Functionalism then, the only real aesthetic faith to which modern architects could lay claim in the inter-war years, is now, if not repudiated, certainly called into question".<sup>109</sup> This general tendency was seen as a new empirical approach, and was thus opposed to the idealist nature of Functionalism theory. Hence the Swedish example was "on the basis of statements made by Swedish architects themselves... called The New Empiricism".<sup>110</sup> The second article on "The New Empiricism"<sup>111</sup> included sections on its theory, technique and architectural education. The section devoted to theory by E de Maré, "The antecedents and origins of Sweden's latest style", defined the characteristics of the new style as:

- (1) a reaction against a too rigid formalism, a return to common sense
- (2) freer planning, less concerned with the pattern on the paper
- (3) freer fenestration patterns, i.e. put windows where they are needed and in smaller sizes

(4) use of traditional materials, especially brick and timber

(5) concern for landscaping and planting as an integral part of the whole design.

Therefore by 1948, the New Empiricist style had been fully defined and illustrated, and firmly located in the context of the politics of Sweden's Welfare State.

The Swedish example had therefore become another paradigm for British post-war reconstruction, with its own specific references and ideologies. The insistence on its humanist base; the constant reference to the public as originators of the aesthetic and design elements, made it acceptable to both the "New Empiricists" of Richards' AR and to the more radical "New Humanist" group.

(iii) Paradigm III: Russia. Information and literature in architectural journals concerning post-revolutionary Russian architecture started to appear in the 1930s. This ran parallel to the broader general interest in Russia and to Communism in particular. The first extensive review of Russian architecture was in a special issue of the AR<sup>112</sup> in 1932, in which R. Byron and B. Lubetkin gave two interpretations of the "Russian Scene". The purpose of this issue was to prepare those English architects who were to attend an International Congress of Modern Architecture planned in Moscow, and for those who "as the result of current opinion in England" and of Russia's invitation to Western architects, intended to go and work in Russia. As the <sup>e</sup>Forword stated, Byron's article:

sees the architecture first, and deduces the present state of aesthetic opinion in Russia from what has already been built. His is the traditional way of arguing, and to this country the only way that seems feasible.

In contrast, Lubetkin:

argues in the opposite direction to Mr. Byron. He will have some logical plan for architecture first, and then build after the aesthetic theories have been found suitable for the common good... To the English reader a discussion of architecture in terms of 'ideology' will be somewhat startling.

Lubetkin outlined four distinct groups and theories in contemporary Russian architecture, namely Constructivism, ASNOVA and its formalism, SASS and its functionalism and WOPRA and its criticism based on the Dialectic Method. These four theories could co-exist because, as the foreword outlined:

the individual must merge himself into a group, which considers whether matters such as either utility or planning or symbolism are of the greatest social importance to architecture. The result is not one system of ideas, but several, and it is only natural that they should then be judged in the light of that Marxian dialectic, which is the basic philosophic doctrine of the U.S.S.R. Only such theories as survive this sanctioning materialise in actual buildings.<sup>113</sup>

This article, with its clear outline of the developments in Russian architectural theory and the use of a Marxist analytical model for style, stands out as the most advanced architectural criticism of the period. As this was written in 1932 from memory of events prior to his departure, Lubetkin failed to point out that by this date, Stalin had implemented (rather than as the natural outcome of the 'dialectic' process operating on these four styles) a Socialist Realist policy based upon WOPRA's opposition to the other 'Modernist' groups. It is primarily due to this abandonment of Western Modern Movement theories during the 1930s that Western interest in Russian architecture waned. It was not until the 1940s that the interest initiated by the Byron and Lubetkin articles re-emerged. In the context of the 1940s this interest was also of a different nature, and had more to do with Socialist Realist policy, than

with seeing Russia as a revolutionary state applying the revolutionary architectural ideas of the Modern Movement of the 1920s.

The rise in interest in Russia during the war years was initiated in 1941 by the Alliance with Stalin. The Alliance was marked by a telegram sent to the president of RIBA by Soviet architects which stated "In this historic hour we express our deep friendship for our British colleagues and for the people of Britain".<sup>114</sup> Thus the enthusiasm of intellectuals for the USSR of the 1930s became a national orthodoxy in the 1940s. This led to at least five years of plenty of pro-Soviet propaganda, which only gradually trailed off after the war, with details of Stalin's policy becoming known and the adoption of cold-war policies. This culminated in the political reaction against Communists in public office of c. 1950 onwards, and was reinforced after the invasion of Hungary in 1956. But for the period 1941-1948, due to the influence of Richards' and Summerson's interest in a new collectivist society and the social aspects of architecture, architectural journals (especially the AR) carried numerous articles describing aspects of Russia's Reconstruction.

The other main means of spreading ideas about Russia was through organisations specifically interested in Russia, visits to Russia, lectures, symposia and exhibitions on Russian architecture, and books on Communism and Russian architecture. The Society for Cultural Relations with the USSR (SCR) was founded in 1924 and had an 'Architecture and Planning Group', which was formed at the end of the war. A. Ling, B. Lubetkin, C. Penn, N. Craig and C. Barr were all involved in this group, which produced regular bulletins, which were edited by B. Lubetkin. The SCR also had a branch at the LCC, and many of its members were also involved with the ABT and the Communist Party

Architects groups. These groups and others also organised visits to Russia; there was an AASTA trip in 1939, an ABT trip in 1953 and J. Forshaw and other architects from the Ministry of Housing and Local Government were invited over in 1955.

Therefore many architects interested in Russian architecture had the opportunity, in this period, to travel to Russia and to meet with Russian architects and to see their work. Numerous lectures were given, especially by architects who had visited Russia and who returned with new photographic material. The lectures ranged from those describing the technical aspects of Russia's reconstruction, e.g. J. Forshaw and R.C. Bevan at the RIBA in 1956,<sup>115</sup> to ones looking specifically at Socialist Realism, e.g. Dr. F. Klingender at the RIBA in 1945.<sup>116</sup>

The SCR also organised symposia, e.g. 'Architecture and building technique in the USSR' in 1954, which was later published as a pamphlet,<sup>117</sup> and the earlier 'The Kind of Architecture we want in Britain' in 1949.<sup>118</sup> In 1942 at the Wallace Collection an exhibition, '25 years after the Revolution' was opened by Lutyens, president of Royal Academy, and in 1948 the SCR, in collaboration with RIBA, organised an exhibition on 'Architecture of the USSR',<sup>119</sup> to illustrate the variety of architectural work of Russia.

There was also a prescribed body of literature on Russia, and Communism in general, given in bibliographies following the articles. Information was therefore available on Russian architectural polemics as well as Russian political and cultural theories. S. and B. Webb's two volume Soviet Communism: A new civilisation?<sup>120</sup> was the main authoritative text describing the structure of Russia (it also had very brief sections on Town Planning and Housing; these used notes from an article by



C. Williams-Ellis of 1932). W. Gallacher's book, The Case for Communism,<sup>121</sup> a Penguin Special, was a book aimed at the general reader, and clearly outlined the theory of Communism and argued that "only a Communist policy can save us [Britain] from Bankruptcy". In H. Laski's Faith, Reason and Civilisation,<sup>122</sup> a justification of Communism was outlined, which was based upon an argument that considered it to be the Modern World's equivalent to Christianity. This extensive and varied body of literature, published in the short period of the early 1940s, offered a very positive and enthusiastic view of Russian Communism, which optimistically presented it as a possible model for post-war Britain.

This interest and acceptance of Russian architecture as a major experiment in social reconstruction is perhaps best illustrated by the fact that Victor Vesnin, President of the Academy of Architecture of the USSR, was awarded the Royal Gold Medal by RIBA in 1945.<sup>123</sup> Thus architects were well informed concerning all aspects of Russia and its architectural theories and practices. This led to the development of Russia as a paradigm for post-war reconstruction of Britain. The main features of this were:

- (1) to use Russia as a political, economic, social and professional model for Britain.
- (2) to adopt Russia's Socialist Realist theory as a model for Britain, and to consider the appropriateness of Russia's return to classicism as a suitable example for a proletarian style in Britain.

The use of this model for a restructuring of Britain is best seen in the writing of A. Ling. Ling visited Russia in 1939 on an AASTA tour and stayed on to research developments in town planning practice in Russia. The result of this visit and research were three articles on Soviet

Architecture<sup>124</sup> and a booklet Planning and Building in the USSR<sup>125</sup>. The cover of the booklet stated:

The author, Arthur Ling, architect and town planner, was in Moscow when war broke out studying Soviet Town Planning. He considers their progress in this field equals, and in many respects surpasses that of any country in Europe and their experience could be of great value to us in our problems of reconstruction.

He then went on to outline the Russian example, stressing that Russia's achievement since the Revolution relied upon the Nationalisation of Land and state control of Industry. He cited Zaporozhie, the Dnieper Dam town, as an example of the Russian approach, highlighting the way in which the townspeople controlled the development plans and altered the layout and design of the houses. Both these were originally based on Modernist examples, a garden city plan after E. May, and housing in a 'Constructivist' style. He sums up by saying:

Being inexperienced, they [the Town Planners] naturally borrowed from others... in this case they carried out an experiment in town-planning, found it unsatisfactory, and proceeded to change the nature of the plan entirely to fit peoples' lives. The technocratic approach of trying to make people's lives fit a town-planning theory had failed.<sup>126</sup>

Zaporozhie therefore becomes an anti-modernist example which showed the rôle of the architect and planner as a technician serving the interests and ideas of the people.

The Russian architectural profession was also analysed by Ling. He discussed architectural education where "particular emphasis is laid on the social conditions which produce and nurture each stage of style and development",<sup>127</sup> and the organisation of the profession under the All Union Congress of Architects. The duty of the union was "to build for the Soviet people, to discuss how their architecture can be improved, and

to look after members' interests; conditions of work salaries and health etc..."<sup>128</sup> Architects were also locally organised under a collective Planning Bureau:

There are no private architects, all architects are organised under the City Soviets in local planning bureau. Individual architects can, however be commissioned with permission from the head of their bureau to carry out a job for a co-operative trade union or other organisation. They do this work at the bureau, and pay their own overhead costs... out of their own fees.

The members of a bureau work as a team, regular office meetings are held, and lively collective criticisms are made on the projects. When the project receives the sanction of the chief of the bureau it passes to a special council composed of heads of all bureau in the town, and is sent by them, after criticism, to the Town Council or Soviet. Direct contact is maintained with the general public through the latter's representative on the council and by<sup>129</sup> local exhibitions and newspaper illustrations inviting criticism...

For Ling, Russia provided not only an ideal political and social structure, but also a system of organising the entire architectural profession. These aspects of the organisation of the Russian architectural profession were ones that influenced Ling and ABT in their attempts to reform British architectural practise in the late 1930s and 1940s, e.g. the use of a non-hierarchical office structure and the formation of an Architects' Union.

The analysis of Russia's Socialist Realist policies was covered in articles by A. Ling and E.J. Carter.<sup>130</sup> These articles provided both a stylistic analysis of Russia's Socialist Realism as well as a theoretical justification of it. Carter's is the most succinct account. He defined the rôle of the architect as one which must:

refine and develop mass experience, to heighten its reality by the power of artistic endeavour... [but always] under the main directive and discipline of mass opinion. This is merely translating into terms of art theory and practice the political theories of Communism.<sup>131</sup>

The aesthetic principle of Socialist Realism, he defined as:

'Realism' demands of the artist constant, active participation in the daily activities and the emotions of the people whom he serves. But [such] participation is not necessarily 'socialist' realism. Such participation is a characteristic according to Soviet theory, of all good art; but it may imply only the existence of this unity as between artist and the limited community of the ruling class of the time. The eighteenth century architect achieved this... What the Soviet claims to have added and has elevated into a positive principle is the 'Socialist' characteristic... So that every element of the activity and emotion of a whole people is tapped as the influence compelling the artist... But it also implies fundamentally that the art is a part of the socialist dynamic. It is on the move.<sup>132</sup>

Carter continued his argument by accounting for Russia's rejection of European Modernism, which was then replaced by a return to Classicism.<sup>ic</sup> This he stated was the choice of the Russian people,<sup>133</sup> who saw it as their great city architecture, "It was the symbol of all that their rulers had enjoyed at their expense and that now they could enjoy too".<sup>134</sup> He described two elements in this return to Classicism, one style continuing the classical architectural traditions of Russia and the other a style developed by WOPRA, which was a compromise between neo-classicism and functionalism. Carter then dismissed traditional universalist aesthetics:

no such tireless absolute standards are admitted in Marxist criteria, and to attempt to import them in judgement of work created with a deliberate disregard of the classical absolutes and classical formalism, is to start on a track that leads further and further from understanding of Soviet architecture.<sup>135</sup>

He therefore contends that a 'style's' meaning is dependent upon its particular historical context, and that is why a form of neo-classicism can be called a socialist style in Russia, whereas "under British traditions and the structure of society in present day Britain it would have quite a different meaning".<sup>136</sup>

Carter's article therefore provided a complete analysis of Socialist Realism, which saw it as an expression of popular taste. That is, Russia's return to classicism was seen as a direct expression of proletarian culture. He also discounted Universalist and Absolutist aesthetic theories, and replaced them with a Relativist theory, that applied meaning to forms that depended upon their specific context. He therefore managed to dismiss contemporary criticism which either saw Russian classicism as just plain 'bad' or suggestive of traditional Imperialist Bourgeois power. The accompanying illustrations to these articles on Soviet Socialist Realism of the 1930s mainly showed monumental public buildings. For example plates 12, 13 and 14 which show examples of a derivative and traditional Russian classical style, and plates 15 and 16 which illustrate the WOPRA form of classicism. Illustrations of housing schemes were less frequent, but showed Russia's move away from Modern Movement aesthetic and planning ideas in the later 1930s, for example the project for Kiev, 1939 (plate 17) and a block of flats in Moscow (plate 18), shown under construction with classical rustication detailing, produced using pre-fabricated concrete facing panels. The only illustration of 2-storey housing was in the AR's article 'Reconstruction in the USSR'<sup>137</sup> (plate 19), which showed various elevational treatments using a wide range of traditional picturesque details: including window shutters, half-timbering, bay windows etc.

The use of Russia as a model structure and of Socialist Realism as an aesthetic theory produced a very different paradigm when compared to the Le Corbusian and Swedish ones already described. It was far more concerned with theoretical rather than architectural issues. It therefore did not offer a ready made socialist aesthetic that could be directly re-applied to post-war Britain in the way that the Le Corbusian

and Swedish paradigms did.

The use of this positive image of Russia however becomes increasingly inappropriate from the early 1950s onwards. As anti-communist attitudes increased, and cold-war strategies developed, the Russian paradigm became unacceptable. This shift is seen in the articles on Russian architecture in journals. Those of the early 1940s were positive and openly discussed Marxist theory and Communism, but by 1950 mainstream journals like the AR had ceased to cover Russian architecture at all. Those articles which did appear, like the 1954 SCR Symposium notes, were practically devoid of political content, and an emphasis was made on the moderate nature of Russian policy. Socialist Realism ceases to be seen as an expression of proletariat culture by 1954, when Khrushchev made his first criticism of Stalinist architectural practices which wastefully used monumental scale and classical detailing. The late 1950s, saw the re-introduction of Western Modern movement architectural ideas into Russia. By this time Socialist Realism was identified with Stalinist repression, whereas the International style of the Modern Movement was identified with individualism and freedom of the west. Thus a reprint of a 1947 interview with A. Vesnin, 'On Social Realism in Architecture' in Architectural Design in 1959, could see Vesnin's stylistic shift towards classicism in the 1930s as "a pathetic illustration of how [he] tried to meet official tastes",<sup>138</sup> rather than Vesnin being compelled by the whole people to express their activity and emotional needs.

Together, these three paradigms formed the theoretical and aesthetic framework for post-war architectural design. It is in the context of these clearly defined paradigms that the meaning and significance of the

design of ICC housing has to be assessed.

## 1.2. CENTRAL GOVERNMENT POLICY: 1939-1956.

This section will follow the development of Central Government Housing policy from 1939 to 1956 through an analysis of parliamentary debates and Ministry of Health reports and publications. However, because the debates of the war and post-war years were firmly rooted in the developments of the inter-war period, it is necessary to outline briefly the main characteristics of inter-war policy, before going on to consider later developments. Indeed, such a retrospective assessment of the inter-war policies was something that was very much in the minds of those involved in the housing debates of the early 1940s, and the study that was of central importance, was Marian Bowley's book, Housing and the State.<sup>1</sup>

### The Inter-war Years, 1918-1939.

Bowley, as an economist, presented her research as an objective analysis of the economic implications of the various inter-war subsidy experiments,<sup>2</sup> and as such attempted to avoid getting directly involved in the politics of housing policy. As the only widely available analysis of state housing in the mid 1940s,<sup>3</sup> it played a significant part in the formation of opinion as to the achievements and merits of inter-war policy, and as such it is worth quoting its findings and conclusions.

Bowley defined inter-war policy as "The three experiments in state intervention to improve the supply of houses, 1919-39". These she described as 'the First Experiment 1919-23' in which a subsidy for general provision of state housing was introduced for the first time under the Addison Act, 'the Second Experiment 1923-1933/4' in which the subsidy was reduced and private enterprise was encouraged to supply homes



for low income groups, and 'the Third Experiment 1933/4-39' where there was a return to a slum clearance only policy. These three experiments Bowley attributed to three main strategical points of view on state intervention in housing,<sup>4</sup> namely (i) state intervention as a brief emergency response to the crisis after the Great War, (ii) the more general idea that the state should be responsible for improving the standards of working class housing, and (iii) that the state should concentrate on the problems of the slums, and carry out a slum clearance and overcrowding programme only.

Strategies (i) and (ii) can therefore be seen to have given rise to 'The First Experiment', with the 'Homes for Heroes' building campaign and the 1919 Housing and Town Planning Act (Addison Act). Strategy (i) for 'the Second Experiment' and the 1923 Housing Act (Chamberlain Act), and strategy (iii) for 'the Third Experiment' and the 1930 Housing Act (Greenwood Act) and 1933 Housing Act.

Bowley's analysis of the inter-war policy failed to make the political nature of these three experiments explicit.<sup>5</sup> She was however quite aware of the political nature of housing:

Housing policy had become a national issue. It was no longer the special interest of isolated groups of social reformers. It had graduated into the world of party politics. With the slogan 'Homes fit for Heroes', it started its career as a pawn in the political game of bribing the electorate with vague promises of social reform... For the twenty years between the Great War and the present war, housing policy consisted of a series of partially thought-out and partially understood experiments.<sup>6</sup>

The party politics of the inter-war years can be summarised as a Conservative strategy which sought to minimize state intervention and to encourage private enterprise for the provision of working class housing, and a Labour strategy that sought to make the state responsible for the

general provision of working class housing, as well as slum clearance, by adopting a subsidy system of financial assistance to local authorities. A review of the content of the inter-war years housing acts, in the context of the prevailing party in government, illustrates this point.<sup>7</sup> The Addison Act of 1919 was a response by the Liberal/Conservative coalition government to the post-war crisis where the introduction of a radical housing policy was seen as an essential insurance against revolution.<sup>8</sup> This was based upon the recommendation of the 1918 Tudor Walter's Report and relied heavily upon Raymond Unwin's ideas, and can be seen as an early strategy of the Labour movement.

This was modified in 1923 by the Conservative government, 1922-24, which in the 1923 Chamberlain Act reduced the subsidy and made it available to private builders who were given preference in providing housing for the working classes. The 1924 minority Labour government then increased the subsidies in the 1924 Wheatley Act, which survived the 1924-29 Conservative government, while the 1929-31 Labour government introduced a slum clearance programme in the Greenwood Act of 1930 (to run alongside the Wheatley Act). This double-edged programme (of the Labour government) never took effect because the Conservative-dominated coalition government of 1931-35, (in its 1933 Housing Act) abolished subsidies for general-needs housing. This left the Greenwood Act which was only a slum clearance programme. The experience of a continual shift and swing between Conservative and Labour policy, in which only minor or incremental changes were made on the 1919 policy of state intervention by central government subsidies, formed the background to the debates of the war and post-war years.

The Conservative government policy, in operation immediately prior

to the outbreak of war, can be seen summarised in the Ministry of Health publication, About Housing, of 1939,<sup>9</sup> which outlined their housing policy and its main principles. These were that the ideal tenure type to be aimed at was home ownership, as:

the ownership of property cultivates prudence. Clearly it encourages thrift, fosters the sense of security and self dependence, and sensibly deepens citizens consciousness of having a 'stake in the country', and the influence is surely one which, spreading from the individual to the community and linking all classes, must contribute appreciably to national stability.<sup>10</sup>

The pamphlet noted the increase in home-ownership between 1918-1939, which by 1939 represented 15% of all houses in the country. These were to be supplied by private builders. It was hoped that this shift of the upper working classes and the middle classes to home-ownership would open up the lower end of the private rented market for the lower income groups, thus leaving only the problem of slum clearance. This problem couldn't be ignored, as the pamphlet warned: "the evil effects of bad housing tell not only on the individual but also on the general welfare of the community".<sup>11</sup> These effects were especially a high incidence of TB. and infant/maternal mortality. This task of rehousing slum dwellers became the responsibility of the local authorities, as private builders could not be expected to provide for those unable to afford an economic rent.<sup>12</sup>

This strategy was therefore one appropriate to an advanced capitalist economy, where housing had become a commodity, either supplied by private enterprise and financed by Building Societies in the form of home-ownership, or in privately owned accommodation to rent. State intervention had been reduced to a minimum, and allowed only for slum clearance, a task necessitated mainly on health grounds.

The housing debate was, accordingly, highly polarized by 1939. The conflicting ideologies of a capitalist and a socialist housing strategy were clearly defined. However, it was the capitalist strategy that had been more extensively tried out, and because of that it offered a better worked out set of principles and practices.

The War Years, 1939-1945.

(1) The Dudley Report. Housing, like the other major social issues, was the subject of various reports carried out during the war. The most significant of these was the report of the Design of Dwellings Sub-Committee of the Central Housing Advisory Committee (hereafter called the Dudley Report),<sup>13</sup> appointed by the Minister of Health of the Conservative/Labour coalition government on 20th March 1942, and chaired by the Earl of Dudley. This report was published as The Design of Dwellings by the Ministry of Health in February 1944, and was to provide the frame of reference for post-war housing legislation. The terms of reference given to the committee were "to make recommendation as to the design, planning, layout, standards of construction and equipment of dwellings for the people throughout the country".<sup>14</sup> As the committee observed, this:

would justify an examination of the whole field of housing. We have decided, however, to confine our consideration to the type of permanent dwelling commonly built by local authorities, bearing in mind that their present powers under Part V of the Housing Act, 1936, are restricted to the provision of dwellings for the working classes. Nevertheless, the standards we recommend are equally applicable to all types of housing, and we feel that steps should be taken to ensure<sup>15</sup> that development by private enterprise does not fall below them.

The committee neatly side-stepped any possible entanglement in the re-definition of the rôle of state housing, and instead assumed a general

continuation of pre-war policy.<sup>16</sup>

However, even within this restricted scope, the report was of considerable importance for its recommendation as to the general principles of state housing. Under its suggestions for general principles it expressed a greater awareness of the consumers' needs. These were defined by the housewife who was the "expert", so that local authorities "should have constant regard to her views",<sup>17</sup> and include women on their housing committees. As regards general design, it suggested that architects should be employed: "Design is the function of the architect. In the past too little use has been made of trained architects... we therefore recommend that... the Minister of Health should require all local authorities to employ a trained architect in connection with their housing schemes..."<sup>18</sup> This it was hoped would ensure that "in the future local authorities 'will set out with the intention of adding positively to the beauties of the Town and Countryside".

However, the most important suggestions were in the area of layout. "In considering one section of our terms of reference - namely layout - we have entered on a wider field. Here we suggest means for the erection of complete communities rather than the development of purely residential estates for a single social class".<sup>19</sup>

The Tudor Walter's Report, the last major government report on housing, of 1918, had conceived of local authority estates only as small developments. With the rise of new large local authority estates, there arose the need for new ideas; thus the committee set up a study group from the Ministry of Town and County Planning, whose report was added as an appendix to the Dudley Report. This report outlined the planning and

layout principles necessary to achieve 'complete communities'. The main concept used was that of the neighbourhood. The report recognised that:

the solution of the housing problem does not lie wholly in the provision of the number of dwellings which may be required, however well-planned, well-designed, well-constructed and well-equipped every one of these dwellings may be... In other words, the subject of housing is allied<sup>20</sup> very closely indeed to the subject of town and county planning.

This conception of the urban "neighbourhood" which as the report said, was "of very recent date", had become the principal component in the planners' formulations for reconstruction.<sup>21</sup> The report had a separate section devoted to neighbourhood planning, discussing all aspects of its content, but the ones of particular interest were concerned with the concepts of 'social well-being' and 'social balance'. It was thought that if in the reconstruction plans the 'ideal' neighbourhood unit, as described in the report, was used, there would be 'a guaranteed "feeling of neighbourhood and community which is one of the fundamentals of social well-being"'. Also, within this neighbourhood it recommended;

that a variety of dwellings should be provided. A great deal of evidence has been submitted indicating that each neighbourhood should be 'socially balanced', inhabited by families belonging to different ranges of income groups, or at least not so unbalanced as to be restricted to dwellings and families of one type or income level only, as the case may be.

It was also observed that:

there are practical difficulties in the way of indiscriminately mixing the dwellings of the various income groups. The way to success would lie... in so arranging the dwellings within the neighbourhood plan that it is made up of several minor groups of dwellings, each one of which would have its own distinctive character, largely dependent on the size of dwelling and arrangement of plot plans... these minor groups should provide for 100-300<sup>22</sup> families.

Therefore, as a government report, the Dudley committee's recommendations

were breaking new ground by extending the discussion of housing into the domain of social engineering.<sup>23</sup> Local authorities were now expected, with the professional help of architects and planners, to construct "beautiful" neighbourhoods, which at the same time were "socially balanced". The resulting communities, physically broken up into distinct groups of 100-300 families of similar "type" or "income level", by road and open space networks, would in this way generate the rather ill defined aura of "social well-being".

The report also made recommendations as to the design of these ideal communities. One of the problems of inter-war estates, it noted, was the lack of variety of type of accommodation. Nearly all homes were three bedroom types which failed to cater for the needs of the variety of tenants (these ranged from single persons, the old, couples and various sized families) that were on local authorities' waiting lists. One solution to this was "for a mixed development of family houses mingled with blocks of flats for smaller households".<sup>24</sup> This would also alleviate the "dreary barrack like" appearance of inter-war flatted estates, as mixed development:

makes possible more intimate and varied grouping of the buildings around churches, shopping centres, public houses and community buildings, more imaginative use of open space and of the contours and natural features of the site; more attractive gardens; and more diversity in the height of blocks and in the treatment of roof lines.

The Dudley Report was therefore the first instance where the concept of 'mixed development' was proposed as a strategy to give both a social and architectural 'mix'.

(ii) Housing Manual 1944. The Dudley Report was signed and submitted to the coalition government on 8th February 1944. This report was

ostensibly used as the basis for the Housing Manual 1944, jointly published by the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Works.<sup>25</sup> However, the Manual makes little or no mention of social balance, mixed development or social well-being. The concept of the neighbourhood is introduced in Section I, 'Housing and Site Planning', but this is solely defined in 'physical' terms; density, open space, road networks etc. No mention is made of social balance. The concept of mixed development also gets little attention. The ideas concerning individual house and flat types recommended by the Dudley report do get taken up, but suggestions for creating a 'mix' of types within estates is not elaborated on, save for a couple of diagrammatic examples of combining 2-storey houses and 3-storey flats, and a photograph of Hampstead Garden Suburb<sup>26</sup> used to illustrate the concept of neighbourhood planning.

The Housing Manual 1944, therefore failed to encompass the broader recommendations and issues which the Dudley report had raised concerning the nature of local authority housing. The Ministry had shown itself unwilling to radically alter the pre-war guidelines for local authorities to follow in their post-war programmes.

(iii) The Coalition Government Housing Programme, 1944-45. The coalition government presented their housing programme in the white paper, Government Policy and Organisation for carrying it into effect,<sup>27</sup> in March 1945. The stated objectives were, (1) to afford a separate dwelling for every family which deserves to have one, (2) a rapid completion of slum clearance and overcrowding programmes and (3) to improve standards of accommodation and equipment by a programme of continuous new building.



The first two years after the war were to be treated as an emergency, in which the maximum number of separate dwellings were to be built. To achieve this the programme included repairs to war-damaged houses, conversion of houses, the use of temporary houses and the construction of about 300,000 permanent houses in the first two years, some utilizing prefabricated or non-traditional forms of construction. The financing of this programme was to be in the form of subsidies, payable to both local authorities and private enterprise.

This programme, presented by H.U. Willink, the Conservative Minister of Health, was no more than a continuation of pre-war policy, but with the addition of subsidies reintroduced for general needs purposes. This programme was debated in the House of Commons on 23rd March 1945.<sup>28</sup> The quality of this debate, as noted by L. Silkin,<sup>29</sup> was not only very poor but also lacked any reference to party politics.

There was general agreement about the importance of housing; Sir Thomas Cook said:

the average mans' outlook on life is based on his home surroundings. If his accommodation is bad or indifferent, he feels that this country is letting him down; he becomes discontented, and tends automatically to become an enemy of the state. But give that same man a decent home, and he will soon appreciate his responsibilities, and life for him will become worthwhile.

The view that home-ownership should be the type of tenure to be encouraged and aimed for, was also widely held. The Minister of Health pointed out that "the government do not for one moment fail to appreciate the underspread desire for home ownership or its social advantages".<sup>31</sup> Sir H. Selley thought this was possible because every man "has a nest-egg in a Building Society".<sup>32</sup> He therefore thought that private enterprise (Selley was himself a private builder) could supply housing

for all classes and that all returning soldiers would not want municipal housing. Private enterprise was therefore to be encouraged as much as possible in this programme, making subsidies available to private builders as well as to local authorities.

There was no opposition to this programme, save for a general concern that 300,000 houses was an inadequate target for the first two years. The ideological ramifications of the housing debate were simply not understood or raised by the members of the house. This was to be characteristic of subsequent debates on Housing.

It was left up to Arthur Greenwood, (author of the 1930 Greenwood Housing Act) in the debate of the housing programme by the government's Supply Committee, in the House of Commons in June,<sup>33</sup> to raise the level of the debate, and to highlight the ideological nature of the programme. Greenwood saw the post-war crisis in housing as ultimately stemming from 19th-century Tory rule. Housing, Greenwood considered, was all about land use and ownership. He remarked that the Barlow, Scott and two Uthwatt reports had never been debated, and concluded that the coalition government couldn't deal with these issues since the Conservatives were so much in favour of the private ownership of land and homes.<sup>34</sup> However this critique was not developed further and Willink's plans for post-war reconstruction remained intact. The dominant views expressed by members in this limited debate were therefore all borrowed from the inter-war years experience. Using Bowley's categories, the coalition government's housing programme consisted of two out of three of the strategies. The first saw the immediate post-war period as a period of crisis which necessitated state intervention in the provision of 'general needs housing'. This was to take the form of subsidies to local authorities

and was to run alongside private enterprise, which would also be allowed subsidies due to the anticipated high costs of materials and labour. The main motivation for this stemmed from a belief that returning soldiers would expect a decent home to return to. The 'Homes fit for Heroes' attitude, and the fear of social unrest, (based on the experience of the years following the first world war) were ideas frequently expressed on both sides of the house. Greenwood in his speech is characteristic of a point of view which saw housing as a key issue in post-war politics:

we believe that houses are the temples of the spirit of our people... a proud and worthy people, such as we have proved ourselves to be are entitled to honourable and dignified conditions of life... it would be terrible if social disorders, social bitterness, social disappointment and new hatreds were allowed to grow because the ex-soldier and his wife have nowhere decent to live.

The other attitude in the programme was that after the immediate crisis was over, the state should only be concerned with slum clearance programmes, leaving general needs housing to private enterprise. These two objectives expressed in the coalition governments housing programme, failed to pick up on any of the radical ideas outlined in the Dudley Report as to how state housing could be redefined, and merely maintained and continued Conservative pre-war policy.

#### The Post-War Years, 1945-56.

(1) The 1945 Election Campaign. Towards the end of the war, at the 1944 party conferences, it was decided by both the Labour and Liberal parties to return to politics on party lines. This, despite the claim by the Conservatives that "Housing is one of the non-controversial issues in party politics today",<sup>35</sup> led to the development of distinct party policies on housing. These were developed and were to become central issues for the forthcoming election. The importance of the debate on

housing was widely understood, and the 1945 Conservative Party Conference passed the statement:

That this conference (believes) that the provision of homes is a major post-war task, and that any government in office in the immediate post-war period will be judged in <sup>36</sup>no small measure by its success or failure in handling this problem.

(a) Conservative Party Policy. In 1941 the Central Committee on Post-War Reconstruction was set up to prepare pamphlets for post-war party politics. A housing sub-committee was formed to prepare a report for a policy for housing.<sup>37</sup> Their two main reports, an interim and final report entitled 'Looking Ahead, Foundation for Housing'<sup>38</sup> formed the basis of Conservative post-war housing policy. The interim report was of a more general nature. It considered housing in relation to broader town planning issues; it concurred with the main directives of the Barlow Commission and recognised the failure of Town and County Planning during the inter-war years. It also raised the issues of compensation and betterment, and land ownership. It dismissed the idea of nationalisation of land, preferring national control of land usage combined with a revised and less complicated system of compensation and betterment as suggested in the Uthwatt report. It was also critical of inter-war large suburban estates which 'herded' together great numbers of a single social class. The authors defined their future housing standards as: a house for all; to be near work, country and community facilities; its cost to be within the occupier's means; housing to be a thing of beauty; domestic in scale, of simple unaffected design and above all to be a private house with a garden. The ideal home, as defined above, was to have the function of "elevating the poor",<sup>39</sup> who in their new "good homes" would bring up their children well and thus increase the population, which in turn would generate a strong and numerous labour force to prevent Britain

from becoming a third class power,<sup>40</sup>

The final report gave a more detailed outline as to how to achieve these ambitions. The programme consisted of three stages; (i) an Emergency stage: to provide shelter for the entire population, (ii) an Intermediate stage: a slum clearance and overcrowding programme and (iii) a Final stage: to improve the general standard and quality of homes. All this was to be achieved by the "Combined strength of the local authorities and private enterprise".<sup>41</sup> The cost, after the first emergency stage was not to be borne by the state: "It must be our constant aim to achieve conditions under which the building and disposal of houses whether by sale or rent, are once more governed by the laws of normal supply and demand". Home-ownership was to be encouraged, but it was also seen as necessary "to provide in every neighbourhood, not only houses to let to wage-earners, but a supply of houses at reasonable rents suitable for all grades of the community".<sup>42</sup>

The reports considered contemporary ideas on the housing problem and presented a Conservative critique of them. The committee were aware of the need to extend and revise their minimal pre-war policy to accommodate the ideological changes that had taken place during the war: "great wars bring about fundamental changes, not only material and scientific but in the sphere of ideas and outlook. Thus in Britain, it is now everywhere agreed that there is need for further social progress and better conditions of life".<sup>43</sup>

The report took its lead on social progress in housing from the Dudley Report. It mentioned, albeit briefly or indirectly, the concepts of neighbourhood and community, social balance, mixed development and architectural control of the quality of the design of housing. Therefore

in many ways it appeared to be presenting a progressive housing policy, which aimed to please both the consumer (the public), and the professional (the housing managers, planners and architects). However, it was the means used to achieve this that were significant. That is, limited state intervention (save for an initial period in response to the crisis) maintaining as far as possible free market conditions of 'normal supply and demand', and thus giving free reign to private enterprise. It was nonetheless a very sophisticated transformation of the 1939 About Housing pamphlet, and showed how well the Conservative party had assessed the changing ideological debate as regards housing.

(b) Labour Party Policy. The Labour Party too, considered that the war had brought about fundamental changes in society. The Labour Party National Executive conceived of these changes in more theoretical and structural terms than the Conservative's observations of a shift in "ideas and outlook". The National Executive Committee stated their belief in "our entrance into a new phase of history",<sup>44</sup> and that the "war has already, socially and economically effected a revolution in the world as vast, in its ultimate implications, as that which marked the replacement of feudalism by capitalism".<sup>45</sup> This perspective based upon the Marxist concept of historical materialism, was an optimistic analysis of the war's effect on society. Nonetheless it was used as a vehicle to show the inevitable formation of a socialist society after the war, which would contrast with the 'evils of Capitalism' and the unplanned competitive pre-war world. Hence reference was made to the new principles which this society would be based upon; 'the four freedoms of speech, religion, want and fear' (quoting Roosevelt's concept of the 'basic things'). These ideas were further developed for a reconstruction strategy:

The Labour party can contemplate no effort at reconstruction in which considerations of equity are not paramount. It would not be equity... to go back to a world in which there are mass unemployment and distressed areas, in which the ground-landlord and the speculative builder can profiteer from the rebuilding of Britain. Equity means that the principles of ownership responsible for such conditions are no longer permissible in a democratic society.<sup>46</sup> Equity means that there is a reasonable standard of life for all.

The rôle that housing was to play in this construction of a socialist society was outlined in the 1943 pamphlet "Housing and Planning after the War",<sup>47</sup> Like the Conservatives, Labour focused on the issues being discussed by the Dudley Committee and the County of London Plan, especially the problems of land ownership, town planning, decentralisation and community planning. However, the solutions to these problems, based on the socialist concepts of equity and freedom, maintained by state control and intervention, were radically different. National planning controls to "stop people rebuilding their homes (if) against public interest" were suggested. The building industry, "ranking among the most conservative and inefficient of the industries" was to be nationally controlled by registering firms. The supply of building materials were also to be controlled. Nationalisation of land was to be aimed for (despite the political controversy and cost), although a Betterment Levy proposed by the Uthwatt Committee was seen as a temporary step in the right direction.

This state controlled "physical reconstruction of our land" was to lead "towards the building of a New Britain which will bring health, comfort, convenience, beauty and happiness in many cases for the first time, into the lives of our people".<sup>48</sup> However, despite the socialist rhetoric, the report had nothing to say about private enterprise, home-ownership, or socially balanced communities, and thus failed to develop fully the ideas of how a socialist society was to be housed.

A similar failure to confront the main issues is seen in the key Labour Party election manifesto, Let us Face the Future.<sup>49</sup> This pamphlet appealed "to all men and women of progressive outlook, who believe in constructive change, to support the Labour Party", in the election which was seen as a straight polarisation between the capitalism of the Tories and the socialism of Labour. Other than stating the priority that Labour would give to housing, and the controls it would impose, no further details or definition of a socialist housing strategy were given. The election campaign by Labour was fought on more fundamental and abstract issues;<sup>50</sup> the electorate was expected to make their choice between capitalism and the 'hard-faced' men who controlled Britain in the inter-war years with "their own bureaucratically-run private monopolies which may be likened to totalitarian oligarchies within our democratic state",<sup>51</sup> and socialism which promised a New Society where "fair shares" was to be the order of the day. Labour was thus, as Bowley put it, in danger of "bribing the electorate with vague promises of social reform"<sup>52</sup> by failing to adequately outline how socialist housing could, and would be achieved. To some considerable extent the inadequacies of Let us Face the Future were the result of the ideological differences between Labour's Right, which dominated the National Executive (and most especially Herbert Morrison who was Chairman and was responsible for the form of Let us Face the Future) and Labour's Left (led, although not in any organised sense, by Aneurin Bevan), which wanted to see a far more radical attempt at changing the economic structure of post-war society. 'Let us Face the Future' and the Labour election campaign was therefore founded on compromise.<sup>53</sup> The drawing up of a detailed programme was in the end to be left up to Bevan as the new Labour Minister of Health, in the 1945-51 Labour Government.



(ii) The Labour Government, 1945-51. The Labour government formed in July 1945, with a majority of 146, had won in "a straight fight... a fight between private enterprise now expressed as monopoly capitalism, and socialism that realises that the new age is born".<sup>54</sup> However, this commitment to a radical socialism that was going to transform capitalist Britain, was to some extent something that had been foisted upon the Labour Leader, both by the left and by the Conservative election campaign that had used this polarization of free-enterprise versus Socialism as an election gambit. Surprised by victory,<sup>55</sup> Attlee was left with the task of bringing about this transformation. His choice of Bevan, a left wing radical for Minister of Health,<sup>56</sup> was to be of immense importance for the development of a Labour housing programme. This was the more so because of Attlee's tendency to allow his Ministers to get on with their respective tasks without much interference.<sup>57</sup>

Bevan's personal political outlook determined much of his strategy as Minister of Health. He was a 'democratic socialist' who firmly believed in democracy and parliament as an institution. However his socialism was built on a knowledge and a belief in Marxism, and central to his outlook was the concept of 'Historical Materialism' and 'class struggle'. The main aim of his brand of socialist democracy was therefore to capture central state power through democratic and not violent means. The "function of parliamentary democracy, under universal franchise, historically considered, is to expose wealth-privilege to the attack of the people. It is a sword pointed at the heart of property-power. The arena where the issues are joined is Parliament".<sup>58</sup> Bevan's mix of Marxism and Liberalism provided him with an 'end' to be aimed for and a 'means' of achieving it. The end was to see the overthrow of property-power of the capitalist class by the

working-classes (amongst which Bevan included himself), and the means was to be a socialist government in parliament.

Bevan's interest in and use of a clearly defined theoretical framework for his ideas was exceptional in the Labour Party leadership. The Marxist basis of his theory placed him to the left of all his ministerial colleagues. His views and perspectives on the post-war situation were therefore marginalised in the context of the cabinet as a whole. By far the more dominant view held was that of "Fabian Gradualism". Key exponents of this perspective were Herbert Morrison, the Leader of the House, and Hugh Dalton at the Treasury.<sup>59</sup> Nonetheless Bevan's theoretical model of class struggle, resolved by parliamentary socialism, had a significant impact on post-war housing policy.

(a) The Debate on the Housing Shortage, 17th October 1945. The first debate under the new Labour government - and in the light of the subsequent debates on housing, the most extensive - took place on 17th October 1945 when the opposition moved a motion concerning the shortage of housing.<sup>60</sup> The motion was moved, and the debate opened, by R.S. Hudson, who brought up issues concerning rival housing, availability of land, price controls, prefabrication, repairs and Labour's intended output. However the main issue he raised was that of what the rôle of private enterprise would be under the Labour government.<sup>61</sup>

Bevan's response was first to firmly define the present housing crisis, not just as a result of the war, but due to 25 years neglect by the Conservative party in the inter-war years. He then aligned himself and the Labour party with the victims of this rule. Opposing Conservative middle class power to socialist working class domination, he went on to explain the broad outlines of the government's housing policy:

Before the war the housing problems of the middle classes were, roughly, solved. The higher income groups had their houses; the lower income groups had not. Speculative builders, supported enthusiastically and even voraciously, by money lending organisations, solved the problems of the higher income groups in the matter of housing. We propose to start at the other end. We propose to solve, first, the housing difficulties of the lower income groups. In other words we propose to lay the main emphasis of our programme upon building houses to let. That means that we shall ask local authorities to be the main instrument for the housing programme.<sup>62</sup>

He criticised the inter-war years policy for:

the grave civic damage caused by allowing local authorities to build houses for only the lower income groups and private speculators to build houses for the higher income groups. What is the result? You have castrated communities... This segregation of the different income groups is a wholly evil thing, from a civilised point of view... It is a monstrous infliction upon the essential psychological and biological one-ness of the community.

Of the quality of these 'twilight villages' he stated that the works:

by the local authorities were on the whole, aesthetically of a far higher standard than the houses built by private enterprise. You only have to look at the fretful fronts stretching along the great roads leading from London - belonging to what I think one cynic called the 'marzipan period' - to see the monstrous crimes committed against aesthetics by a long list of private speculators in house building.

This critique of housing led on to an argument for mixed development:

It is very difficult for architects responsible for the lay-out of municipal housing schemes to devise their houses in varied architectural composition if they are all to be houses for the same type of people, and the same size of houses. The architectural composition to which we could look with delight must have much more variety in design, and therefore, I am going to encourage the housing authorities in their layouts to make provision for building some houses also for the higher income groups at higher rents.<sup>63</sup>

Bevan also wanted segregation by age group to be avoided: "I hope that the old people will not be asked to live in colonies of their own... The full life should see the unfolding of a multi-coloured panorama before

the eyes of every citizen every day".

Bevan also introduced a licencing system to allow private builders to build for sale, which was to supplement the local authority work, but it was to be a system kept under tight control, and there were to be measures to prevent the houses from being re-sold speculatively.

The role of the local authority in housing was also to be broader, as Bevan instructed them "when considering their tenants, to have regard to the needs of the applicant, no matter to what class or caste in the community he belongs".<sup>64</sup>

As to home-ownership, Bevan stated, "There is no desire on our part to prevent people owning their own houses. So long as the ownership of the houses is an extension and expression of the personality of the owner, it is an excellent thing, but if the ownership of the houses is a denial of somebody else's personality, it is a social affront". The precise meaning of this odd phrasing was not made clear by Bevan when questioned.

These were the main ideas concerning housing strategy which Bevan outlined in his speech. It was a speech which again gave practically no precise details of the way in which these rather abstract ideas and principles were to be implemented. As D.A. Price-White, M.P., noted: "We have heard much of large, general and revolutionary intentions. I believe that all logical thinking members must admit themselves to be disappointed in the complete absence of any practical promises in regard to housing".<sup>65</sup>

The main issue (other than the abolition of the Rural Housing Act) debated after Bevan's statement, was the rôle of private enterprise,

Labour speakers asserting the complete failure of private enterprise between the wars:

It is mainly because private enterprise has miserably failed, that we are in our present position... Private enterprise had had every possible opportunity to meet our housing requirements, and only on occasions when there was plenty of profit to be made, has private enterprise considered in any way the housing of the working class people of this country.<sup>66</sup>

The Conservative view was expressed by J.A. Byers, M.P., who suggested a compromise:

I deprecate the tendency of Hon. Members, on the one hand, to say that private enterprise can do everything, and, on the other hand, to say that it can do nothing... the speculative builder, if allowed to work on his own, will obviously not work entirely in the interests of the community. He has the profit motive, as a result of which he shall not expect him to carry out the task which we want carried out - the provision of working-class homes... Therefore, that while private enterprise had a tremendous contribution to make, it must in the future work under the aegis of the local authority or the central government.

The case for private enterprise was firmly put in a concluding speech by Willink (former Minister of Health). He criticised Bevan's reliance solely upon local authorities, seeing this as "doctrinaire adherence to the belief that all the best progress is made by public authorities" and "with regard to private enterprise builders, I could not help feeling that the (Ministers') remarks were more than a little malicious".<sup>67</sup>

Remarkably the more radical aspects of Bevan's policy (based upon the Dudley Report recommendations) which sought to redefine the nature of state housing, were left undebated. Despite numerous responses to his speech (eighteen speeches were made, not including those by Hudson, Bevan or Willink), hardly any mention was made of the political nature of the programme. Most concerned themselves with more practical aspects of the

housing programme. An exception was A.E. Marples M.P., who asked about housing for the middle classes and astutely observed:

we never hear anything about the middle classes in politics. They do not appear to be represented very strongly but it is about time somebody spoke up on their behalf... I was wondering - I want to make this non controversial - whether the (Minister)<sup>68</sup> was interested in a sort of class warfare in building houses.

This was of course exactly how Bevan's strategy could be viewed, rather than as just a mere opposition to the profiteering of private enterprise.

(b) The 1946 Housing Act. The introductory debate on the Labour government housing policy, set the tone for all subsequent debates. Housing was again debated with the passing of the 1946 Housing Bill,<sup>69</sup> which increased the subsidy dramatically, and changed the proportioning of the cost from the government and local authority from 2:1 to 3:1. Higher subsidies were also available for flats on expensive sites, and for flats of over 4-storeys to allow for the extra cost of installing lifts. The parliamentary secretary to the Ministry of Health introduced the reading of the Bill, hoping that members "would welcome these proposals as being in excess not only of their widest expectations, but even of their highest hopes". Apart from the high level of subsidy (which was to be only a temporary measure for the immediate post-war crisis period when prices were high) there was no change in the way in which state housing was financed. N. Smith M.P. criticised the government for this and considered the subsidy system a poor one, preferring preferential low interest loans, asking "why does the Labour government stop short at socialising credit?" This, the only speech that went back to first principles and did not accept the tradition of subsidy, did not provoke further debate.

Again, the main topic was the opposition's dislike of the <sup>c</sup>exclusion of the private builder and the restrictions on building for sale, and hence home-ownership. This was constantly restated. The principle critique came from G. McAllister M.P., who thought the new subsidy structure, rather than encourage mixed development, would encourage local authorities to build flats in high densities in central areas. He accused Bevan of not being a revolutionary but a Conservative in housing theory, and developed a well informed argument against flats and for houses:

The Minister may imagine that he is following the lead of the French architect and planner Le Corbusier. If he does he is profoundly mistaken. In his latest book 'The Three foundations of a Humane Civilisation' Le Corbusier advocates decentralisation of population and industry, the creation of garden cities, and a low density housing policy... [and] the Minister has a bad bargain if he fills his policies with the cast-offs from a mid European jumble sale.

McAllister developed this case by quoting several contemporary surveys, which showed that 75-98% of the group preferred houses to flats. However, these interesting issues were not debated further.

Bevan's reply was just a restatement of his reasons for giving priority, in the ratio of 4:1 to local authority building over private builders. He said of the opposition that "the Hon Members opposite came forward with the old Tory clap trap. The only remedy they have for every social problem is to enable private enterprise to suck at the teats of the State". Thus the level of the debate conceiving the extent and nature of state intervention in housing was again limited to the positions of pre-war party politics.

When the bill was considered at committee stage,<sup>70</sup> and again for a further reading in the full house,<sup>71</sup> the main additional point to be

broached was that of defining the status of the new local authority tenants. The fact that local authorities were to be "almost the sole agency for the provision of houses" was seen to conflict with their statutory rôle of providing accommodation for the working classes. Bevan's answer to this was basically to redefine the working classes:

I should like to remove the anxieties of Hon. Members who fear that the words 'housing the working classes' are limited, and will have a limiting effect upon the type of house that is constructed. On the contrary, we in the Ministry take a most generous definition of the working classes. Indeed some Hon. Members opposite might qualify for inclusion in that definition. There is no limit whatever... We want diversified communities and we are trying to create them in the modern estates. In some of the loneliest villages of England in the 17th and 18th centuries, people of different income groups all lived together almost in the same street. We want to get rid of the 'stock-brokers' paradise that grew up between the wars. Therefore there is no limitation... on the kind<sup>72</sup> of income-groups for which [local authorities] makes provision.

Space was to be left for the larger houses for higher rents, which were to be built later after the immediate crisis. C.W. Gibson, chairman of the LCC housing committee, speaking on behalf of local authorities, was glad that the bill would "enable local authorities to indulge in the principle of mixed development".<sup>73</sup>

Despite its importance the first piece of housing legislation of the post-war Labour government was passed after its third reading without much debate. It had also been a debate of very limited content and quality, that had failed to confront the ideological changes and implications of Bevan's new perspective on the rôle of state housing. Further debate continued in 1946 and 1947,<sup>74</sup> but this was of an even more limited nature and was no more than a Conservative attack on Labour's housing programme. This attack, carried out also in public in the press,<sup>75</sup> sought to discredit Labour's programme on a purely statistical and numerical assessment. The failure of Labour's programme was blamed



on the use of local authorities rather than the use of private enterprise. "The truth is that the Government, as we on this side have said over and over again, have placed reliance for pure ideological reasons, on an instrument (the local authorities) which is totally inadequate and unsuited to the task in hand".<sup>76</sup>

This attack on Labour's performance solely in terms of numbers of permanent houses completed was an easy target. The already criticised figure of 200,000 homes per year, was to be reduced by the Labour cabinet to 140,000 following the 1947 financial crisis. Although these full cuts were never implemented, the series of huge difficulties that beset local authorities in their attempt to produce houses were easy targets for the opposition, in their general attempt to undermine the new socialist government's attempts at structuring a new society. The yearly output figures therefore became a political issue in themselves and this was to have an important effect in policy decision at the local authority level.

One attempt by the Ministry to counter this attack, was the holding of a special exhibition entitled "Housing Progress", put on at the 1948 Ideal Home Exhibition at Olympia. The exhibition and accompanying pamphlet<sup>77</sup> placed great emphasis upon numbers, with the figure of "100 new houses an hour" given as the present output figure, and a suitable rallying cry from Bevan of "on with the next 200,000!" The leaflet also aimed to show that new socialist houses were "Bigger and Better", being designed by architects who were also raising the standards of quality and design. The neighbourhood concept was also invoked in this debate about quality as well as quantity: "Layouts: Neighbourliness with privacy... Homes are being grouped in such a way as to foster a sense of

neighbourliness, and complete communities are being built in which a full social life can be led..."<sup>78</sup>

(c) The 1949 Housing Act. The second piece of housing legislation introduced by Bevan was the 1949 Housing Act. This was intended to "carry the Government's housing programme to a further stage",<sup>79</sup> that is to increase the state's rôle as arbiter of the nation's housing needs. The Bill's main contribution to this was in the removal of the reference to the 'working classes' in the provision of state housing. This introduced into the statute books something that Bevan had already discussed in his redefining of the 'working class' in an earlier debate. Bevan described how the term had only once before been defined (in a subsidiary Act of 1903):

the expression 'working class' includes mechanics, artisans, labourers and others working for wages; hawkers, costermongers, persons not working for wages, but working at some trade in handicraft without employing others, except members of their own family, and other persons, other than domestic servants<sup>80</sup> whose income in any case does not exceed an average of 30s a week.

Bevan wished to remove this outmoded definition: "we have come to the conclusion that this ridiculous inhibition should be removed and that it should now be possible for the local authority to provide a sort of house which is required by the community". Gibson, chairman of the LCC Housing Committee, speaking in the debate following Bevan's statement, welcomed the Bill:

The point which I like best is that it takes out of the housing legislation the reference to the working classes... What a revolutionary suggestion that is... so far as London is concerned, since the war at any rate, we have been building for all income groups, to use the modern phrase in these matters..., and we are building and letting accommodation to members of what used to be called the middle classes.<sup>81</sup>

This was not just a point concerning semantics. The substitution of the phrases 'working class' and 'middle class' with the phrase 'income groups', represents the ideological shift towards defining a classless society as envisaged by Bevan's new housing legislation: "It is more than time that we got rid of the obsolete and vulgar division of society into classes, which was perpetuated by members opposite".<sup>82</sup> Again Bevan pointed to the fact that this would lead not only to a socially balanced community but also an architecturally pleasing one: "Furthermore, what ought not to be regarded as a minor matter; we cannot get good architectural composition into a township which has all the same type of house. We can only get the aesthetics of good modern architecture into a township which has the most variegated kind of housing in it".<sup>83</sup> This mix was also to be derived from the age and occupation of tenants.

Also of significance in the Bill was the amendment that allowed local authorities to lend money, up to a limit of £5,000, at lower interest rates to allow people to own their own houses if they wished to do so. This was Bevan's minimal attempt at trying to get the state involved in, and in control of, home-ownership. A minor clause also allowed local authorities to sell furniture to tenants which Bevan described as his "contribution towards a property-owning democracy".<sup>84</sup>

The attack on Labour's housing programme continued in public and was next debated in the house on 13th March 1950. This was after Labour had been returned, with their majority reduced to 6. It took place in an amendment put by Elliot, to the Debate on the King's Address, and was used by the Conservatives as a means of discussing housing. Their critique of the Labour housing policy followed their usual strategy of attacking output and suggested that private enterprise would resolve the problems.

Their 1950 election campaign had used a poster showing a family in front of an empty house stating: "Let the builders build you a house now". Bevan called this a "cruel poster, because it led those people who needed houses to believe that all that stood between them and a house was Government policy".<sup>85</sup> The debate had also discussed the problems of mortgages and home-ownership, and data was given to show that due to the low wages of the average male worker, most members of the working classes and the lower middle classes couldn't afford to buy their own house.

Bevan, after dismissing the oppositions attack as "almost an exact repetition of what we have heard before", asked the "House to reject the Amendment as being unworthy of a decent opposition, as being merely an attempt to exploit the emotions of people who are in dire need of houses". In this debate, Bevan saw his rôle as Minister of Health in quite broad terms: "I will go down at least as a barrier between the beauty of Great Britain and the speculative builder who has done so much to destroy it".<sup>86</sup>

(d) The 1949 Housing Manual. The Ministry of Health updated the Housing Manual 1944 in 1949. The scope of the new manual confined itself "to questions concerning the selection of housing sites, the layout, design and equipment of dwellings, and standards of accommodation",<sup>87</sup> as it stated that the Ministry of Town and County Planning were preparing a manual on neighbourhood planning. It referred to the 1944 Dudley Report, which it claimed was the basis for the Manual, and so introduced for the first time an extensive description of the Dudley Reports recommendations concerning neighbourhood planning, mixed development, densities and house to flat ratios. These were illustrated with more recent examples with the work of W. Lewis, Tecton, Hening and Chitty and the London County

Under the chapter on houses it referred to the new higher income group houses:

to meet the needs of all sections of the community and to ensure a properly balanced pool of accommodation, housing estates should include a proportion of larger houses for the higher income groups. These can perhaps best be sited in small groups in various parts of the residential neighbourhood... The working kitchen with a living room and separate dining room will probably be the best plan arrangement, and provision should be made for a garage within the curtilage. The size, accommodation and plan of houses of this type will vary greatly according to the particular circumstances of the locality and of the tenants for whom they will be provided.

Thus local authorities had by mid 1949 been provided with both legislation, finance and guidance (in the form of the Housing Manual 1949), to construct 'balanced communities', providing a variety of housing types to meet the needs of all sections of the community.

(iii) The Conservative Government, 1951-56. Housing had become<sup>89</sup> a key election issue, and a focus for the Conservative attack upon the Labour government's socialist policies. In a 1949 Gallup Poll 61% of those questioned had stated that they were not satisfied with Labour's housing record<sup>90</sup> and thus shown how important the issue of housing was to the electorate. At the 1950 Conservative party conference the housing debate was central to working out an election strategy. A programme of 300,000 houses a year<sup>91</sup> was decided as the main thrust and promise of the election campaign for the 1951 elections. This figure was 50% higher than Labour's target figure of 200,000, which was being reached by 1950/51. This new figure was used in an attempt by the Conservatives to amend the 1950 Labour government's programme, and was stated in the King's Address as one which would "ensure a steady increase in the rate of house

building up to at least 300,000 houses a year".<sup>92</sup> In the same debate, W. Churchill, attacking Bevan's policy on housing, stated that:

we should expand output so as to make it possible for free enterprise... to build large numbers of additional houses, both for sale and to let... Empire, ideologies, past struggles, class warfare, all present their attractive temptations to the active mind, but the foundation<sup>93</sup> of all our health and honour lie in the home and the family.

Churchill developed this line of argument, which combined an attack on the 'organic' changes in society which Bevan had attempted to initiate, with an outline of Conservative policy regarding the ideology of the home, love, marriage and children. This conflation of Conservative political issues with a 'Christian' moral definition of the rôle of the home in family life, also formed an important part of their election campaign which sought to redefine housing. This new definition relocated the discussion on an ideological level, rather than the purely political or practical, and thus made the once central issues of state control versus free enterprise, and quality and standards, only marginal issues. In this way, by attempting to de-politicise housing and to present it in a purely emotive way, it attempted to attract a broader area of the electorate to its policies. The Conservative's overall election strategy was highly successful and returned them to government. Churchill chose Harold Macmillan to head the newly named Ministry of Housing and Local Government and implement its promise of 300,000 houses per year.

By 1951 Bevan's housing policy, despite the set back of the 1947 crisis, had managed to overcome the immediate post-war shortages of materials and labour, and the problems of setting up a housing programme under local authority control, and was producing over 200,000 houses per year.<sup>94</sup> Thus, as The Times review noted "At the end of the year [1951]

Mr. Macmillan had inherited 226,000 unfinished houses started under his Labour predecessors. Thus regardless of the Government's completion, only some very singular bungle could prevent the completion of 230,000 during 1952".<sup>95</sup>

As such, Macmillan had no definite long term Housing Policy, save for the promise of 300,000 houses a year target. This was Macmillan's main concern, and to achieve this he increased the subsidy in the 1952 Housing Act and reduced the minimum size and standards of local authority housing.<sup>96</sup> Funding for the housing programme was protected by the Treasury, despite the balance of payment crisis of 1951-52. Therefore by 1953 the target was reached and by 1954 surpassed.

Macmillan characterised this venture at the 1952 Conservative Party Conference as:

Housing is the greatest of all social needs. It is the first priority among the social services. Even the best of schools, clinics, hospitals, playing fields and libraries are something of a mockery to these thousands of families who have no home of their own. For the home is the basis of the family, just as the family is the basis of the nation. A nation - at any rate a Christian nation - is not just a jungle of warring individuals, it is a community of families... I have therefore tried to make housing a great national crusade... Often it is the case in our country that the popular tunes and ditties of the day reflect more of the true feelings and moods of the people than more solemn and elaborate compositions... There is a song which has a refrain something like this: 'Ours is a nice house, ours is'... that is by no means an ignoble aim.<sup>97</sup>

Again, following Churchill's lead, Macmillan utilized the concept of the Christian nation - whose fundamental component was the family. This conceptualisation of society and the community was therefore ideologically far removed from Bevan's Marxist based analysis which had 'class' as its central concept. Macmillan's extremely sophisticated construction of an apparently apolitical and non-controversial ideology

of housing, which claims to be both Christian and populist (the reference to the popular tunes), attempted to unite all families under a 'great national crusade'.<sup>98</sup>

However, by 1953 when the target of 300,000 had been reached, it was necessary for the Conservative government to outline a longer term housing policy. This was described in the white paper Housing, the Next Step, issued by the Ministry of Housing and local Government.<sup>99</sup> This document picked up on the arguments, themes and strategies of the last Conservative government pamphlet About Housing of 1939,<sup>100</sup> already discussed. It therefore replaced the emphasis upon the rôle of private enterprise in the provision of housing, reducing state control and intervention:

Her Majesty's Government believe that the people of this country prefer in housing as in other matters, to help themselves as much as they can rather than to rely wholly or mainly upon the efforts of the Government, national or local... Private enterprise must play an ever increasing part in the provision of houses for general needs....<sup>101</sup>

This was combined with an emphasis upon home-ownership:

one object of future housing policy will be to continue to promote, by all possible means, the building of new houses for owner occupation. Of all forms of ownership this is one of the most satisfying to the individual and the most beneficial to the nation... Indeed nearly 4 million families in Great Britain already own their own homes.<sup>102</sup>

However, the policy also realised the need for houses to rent: "to meet the requirements of the greater part, perhaps necessarily the greater part - of the population". This was not only to be provided by local authorities, but also by stimulating the private rental sector by lifting the controls on rents and allowing rent increases. Slum clearance was to become once more the main function of local authorities, because general



needs housing was to be provided by private enterprise.

The pamphlet summarised this dual policy of private and state supply of housing as;

fair and sensible... Her Majesty's Government believe that this fresh attack upon the housing problem will commend itself to the great mass of the public as both practical and imaginative... (the government)<sup>103</sup> feel they are setting out on a new and inspiring adventure.

This was an extremely disingenuous way of describing policies that go back to the inter-war years.

The aims of this housing policy were set into motion over the following few years. In 1953 the development charge on new buildings (introduced in the 1947 Labour Town and County Planning Act) was abolished. Thus Labour's first step towards nationalisation of land was removed. In 1954 building licences were abandoned. These two reversals therefore gave free reign to private builders to develop both profitably and without constraint. The Housing Repairs and Rent Act of 1954, and the Rent Act of 1957, led to the de-control of rents for private rented accommodation, which forced up rents. The 1956 Housing Subsidies Act (implemented by Duncan Sandys - Macmillan's replacement at the Ministry of Housing and local government from 1954 onwards) reduced the subsidy available for general needs housing to £10 as an interim measure (and was only available for one bedroomed homes), and increased the subsidy for slum clearance to £22. This was an attempt to confine local authorities to slum clearance work. Local authority work was also made more expensive, when in 1953 the government made local authorities use the money market instead of the Public Works Loan Board. As a side issue, the 1956 Housing Act also gave higher subsidies for higher flats. It was

thought that "in the past it has unintentionally influenced local authorities to concentrate on building blocks of 3, 4 and 5 storeys, which... members will agree are most monotonous".<sup>104</sup>

Thus by 1956, the Conservative government had legislatively completely broken up Bevan's socialist housing programme, reverting to a decontrolled situation similar to that of the late 1930s.

1.3. AN ANALYSIS OF THE CONTROL OF THE DESIGN OF THE LONDON COUNTY COUNCIL'S HOUSING, 1939-56.

This section looks at the organisation and control of housing at local authority level. The changes in responsibility for the architectural control of housing within the London County Council (LCC) are outlined, as well as the main changes of the senior architectural posts that occurred.

The Committees and Departments responsible for housing.

The decision making machinery responsible for housing at the LCC was a complex one (see figure 1). It operated on three levels; (i) the Council as a whole, (ii) a series of special committees with specific functions made up of members selected from the Council, and (iii) departments staffed by Council employees supplying professional skills and expertise to implement the Council's policy.

All major policy decisions regarding housing had to be debated by the whole council and agreed by them. Therefore there existed the possibility of blocking or questioning policy at this level. In fact, as regards housing during this period, this option was rarely exercised. The Council was Labour-dominated throughout the period and inter-party disputes over housing issues were not a feature of Council politics.

The special committees of the Council concerned with housing were;

(1) The Housing Committee. From 1934 to 1947 this committee was known as the 'Housing and Public Health Committee', taking charge of the residual public health functions from the newly formed 'Hospital and Medical Services Committee'. In 1947 with the approaching advent of the National

Health Service a new 'Health Committee' was formed and the Housing and Public Health Committee was renamed simply 'the Housing Committee'. This committee controlled the major policy and decision making aspects of the Council's housing work. With the increased work-load in the immediate post-war period a sub-committee was formed, the 'Housing Management Sub-Committee', on 17th July 1946.<sup>1</sup> Its brief was to look into the management and running of the Council's estates as well as to look at the design work of the Director of Housing and Valuer's Department for both in- and out-county estates. In 1949 with the outside criticism of the Council's design work the Housing Committee Members applied pressure to establish further sub-committees to keep a more detailed check on design matters. A 'Housing (Development) Sub-Committee' and a 'Housing and Town Planning Joint Development Sub-Committee' were formed on 31st October 1949<sup>2</sup> to consider the development of type plans and the layout and elevations of new in-county estates. These three housing sub-committees were streamlined into two on 25th April 1951,<sup>3</sup> when the 'Housing Development and Management Sub-Committee' was formed to look into management and the design of out-county estates, and the 'Housing and Town Planning Joint Development Sub-Committee' was reformed to look at the layout and design of in-county estates. The positions of chairmen and vice-chairmen of the Housing Committee and the various sub-committees are outlined in figure 2. The key personalities involved are C.W. Gibson as Chairman of the Housing Committee from 17th July 1943 to 26th April 1950, and E. Denington as Vice Chairman of the Housing Committee from 4th May 1949 (to 1964 when she became Chairman of the Housing Committee), and chairman of the main Sub-Committee<sup>2</sup>. Their influence over policy and design will be assessed in later sections.

(ii) Town Planning Committee. The Building Acts Committee dealt with

Town planning matters until 1923 when a separate 'Town Planning Committee' was set up. In 1935 a joint 'Town Planning and Building Regulations Committee' was appointed, which changed its name to the 'Town Planning Committee' in 1940. This Committee was therefore responsible for implementing the County of London Plan, and Greater London Plan ideas.

(iii) Finance Committee. All expenditure on housing work was controlled and authorised by the Finance Committee whose main concern was to see that each new development kept to a certain average cost per room, so that undue additional Council funding (after government subsidies had been taken into consideration) was not required. The Finance Committee therefore had considerable power. However its lack of concern with design or policy aspects, reduced all criticism of housing development to purely economic factors.

(iv) General Purposes Committee. During the war and up until 1946 this Committee was amalgamated into the Emergency Committee to form the 'Civil Defence and General Purposes Committee'. From April 1946 it was re-established as the 'General Purposes Committee' and was responsible for advising the Council on matters of overall policy and the appointment of senior staff. It consisted of elected representatives (usually the Chairman) from each of the main committees of the council, together with a specified number of other council members and ex-officio members.

(v) Establishment Committee. This was responsible for the efficiency of the Council's method of management and administration, and for all staffing matters except the most senior posts appointed by the Establishment Committee.

To facilitate co-ordination between these five committees there was the post of Clerk to the Council. The main means of contact between committees was through written reports. The 'Housing and Town Planning Joint Sub-Committee' was an exception where members of two Committees sat together on one sub-committee.

In 1939 the departments involved in housing were;

(1) The Valuer's Department. This was in charge of site <sup>C</sup>acquisition, specifying the class of buildings to be built as well as management (supervising rents and lettings) and maintenance (repairs and estimates of cost).

(2) The Architects' Department; Housing division. This prepared layout plans and detailed plans and drawings for individual housing schemes, and specifications and estimates for supervising the erection of all architectural works of the Council. The architect was also expected to submit from time to time typical plans of flats and cottages to act as a basic guide for design work.

(3) The Chief Engineer's Department. This was responsible for drainage, electrical supplies, lifts etc, and for providing roads and sewers on cottage estates.


(4) The Medical Officer of Health. He was required to inspect and pass the sanitary arrangements.

The Valuer, Architect and Engineer, as Heads of the first three departments, were the most important figures involved, and all co-ordinated directly with each other, and through the Assistant Clerk of the Council. This system of specialisation and organisation into

distinct departments by function had evolved as a result of the Council's large and varied field of work. The complexity of this administrative network shows how diffused the control of housing was. The implications of this management structure for the design of the Council's housing will be assessed in later sections. However, it is clear that the architects working on individual schemes within the Architects' Department operated at a large remove from the policy and decision-making bodies. Their only contact with the Housing Committee was through their heads of department; either the Architect to the Council, his Deputy or the Housing architect, all of which were entirely administrative rather than design posts. Thus the architects working under these were yet further removed from the policy and decision making processes of the Council as a whole. The high degree of specialisation of the Council's work into separate committees also divided decision making into separate spheres. The interests of these different committees were often quite distinct and the need for agreement and compromise put considerable limitations on the scope of the Housing Committee's work.

The Structure and Staffing of the London County Council's Housing Division,  
1939-1956

The following section analyses the structure and staffing of the Housing Division within the Architects' Department, and follows the sequence of changes effected by the Council in the control of Housing. The Architects' Department of the LCC had a relatively long and distinguished history prior to 1939.

The Architects' Department of the LCC, formed in 1880 and run by the LCC's first

Architect Thomas Blashill, did not establish a separate housing section until 1893 under the control of Owen Fleming. This analysis will take as a starting point the retirement of E.P. Wheeler, Architect to the Council and Superintending Architect for the Metropolitan Buildings, in April 1939.<sup>4</sup>

(i) The Pre-war Structure. The organization of the Department had been reassessed a month earlier on the 28th March, 1939<sup>5</sup> when it was decided to strengthen the supervisory staff of the Architects' Department. The new department was responsible for new construction and for statutory work. It was accordingly organized into four working divisions:

(i) the Constructional Division, responsible for new buildings and maintenance

(ii) the Statutory Division, responsible for Town planning and implementing Building Acts

(iii) The Quantities and Measuring and Estimating Division and

(iv) the Administrative Division for organisation and accounts.

Architects responsible for housing formed a separate group within the large constructional division; no separate homogenous Housing Division existed.

Prior to the change of 9th March 1939, the higher posts were that of Architect to the Council, and under him two divisional architects [a Senior Divisional architect, head of the Constructional Division and second in command of the Department (and also acting as Deputy Superintending Architect to the Metropolitan Buildings), and a Divisional Architect acting as head of the Statutory Division] and a Quantity Surveyor supervising Quantities and Measuring, and a Chief Clerk



supervising the Estimating Division and Administration.

The change of 9th March 1939, recommended the formation of the post of Deputy Architect to the Council who would be primarily concerned with the construction division and have general supervisory duties. This effectively reduced the Senior Divisional architect's position to the same level as the other three heads of division and created a separate and more flexible second-in-command post.

The post of Architect to the Council left vacant upon Wheeler's retirement was filled by promoting Frederick Hiorns from the post of senior divisional architect. Hiorns was then 62 years of age and had entered the Council's Architects' Department in 1902.

The newly created post of Deputy Architect was advertised and the ninety-four applicants were reduced to the three that were interviewed by the Civil Defence and General Purposes Committee.<sup>6</sup> They were E.G.G. Bax, FRIBA, J.H. Forshaw, MA., B.(Arch), FRIBA, MC., and E. Williams, MA(Arch), B.(Arch), FRIBA, of the Architects' Department. Forshaw (the youngest) was appointed.

The fact that a progressive architect like Forshaw should not only apply but also be chosen for the job of Deputy Architect at the LCC requires further consideration. Forshaw's post of Chief Architect at the Miners' Welfare Committee (Mines department) had allowed him freedom to experiment with new ideas both in matters of design and staff organization. The pithead baths designed in the late 1920s and 1930s by Forshaw and his group of carefully selected 'modern' architects, experimented with new aesthetic ideas and as such were some of the first public buildings on any large scale to be built in an uncompromising

'modern' style.<sup>7</sup>

The Civil Defence and General Purposes Committee's decision to appoint Forshaw shows their faith in Forshaw's capabilities, and for the need of new ideas and modern methods to be introduced into the LCC's Architects' Department. This appointment can therefore be seen as a tempering of the appointment of Hiorns, approaching retirement, whose appointment must have been looked at as relatively temporary, and one reflecting his long and loyal service. In fact Hiorns retired just over two years later in July 1941, allowing Forshaw (during the war) to take over the post of Architect to the Council without the job being advertised or contested. At the same time it was decided not to fill the vacant post of Deputy Architect due to the near cessation of building work.

A progressive architect of considerable standing had therefore gained architectural control of Britain's largest public Authority Department. Due to the war Forshaw was unable to implement a building programme and so the greater part of his energies were spent on preparing the County of London Plan. This project had been initiated in 1941 by Lord Reith, the Minister of Works, who suggested to the LCC that Abercrombie should work with Forshaw and his staff on preparing plans for the redevelopment of London in preparation for the ending of hostilities. The plan was completed by 1943.

Forshaw also introduced further modifications intended to simplify the Departmental structure; these were passed in May 1945. The two Divisional Architects and Surveyor became: Principal Architect (Constructional Division), Principal Architect (Statutory Division) and Principal Surveyor. A new administration section for all the Department

was set up under the control of a new Principal Administrator of the same rank as the other three heads of divisions. The professional and technical staff grades were also simplified so that the ranks in the Constructional Division became (1) Senior Architect, (2) Architect Grade I, (3) Architect Grade II (4) Architect Grade III and (5) Technical Assistant.

At the same time a new Town Planning Group was set up envisaging the new work the County of London Plan would create. It comprised six divisions under one senior and one assistant senior Planning Officer.

(ii) The post-war structure. At the end of the war the primary concern was for an immediate and massive completion of new houses and flats. Pressure was not only applied from within the LCC (the Housing Committee's waiting list was over 140,000 families) but also from the government. In the meeting of the Housing and Public Health Committee of 7th November 1945<sup>8</sup> a government memorandum of 25th October 1945 entitled "Housing Shortage" was presented and discussed. The text was taken from a Parliamentary Committee debate in the House of Commons on 17th October 1945 on the Housing Shortage. During this the Minister of Health, Bevan, gave details of the streamlining of the Ministry of Health so that it alone dealt with all matters relating to housing. It was hoped that this would speed up the processing of applications by local authorities for new housing schemes. Bevan also stressed the need not only for rapid building but also for the need to build for all classes and sizes of households to provide mixed communities.

Coincidentally at the same meeting of the Housing and Public Health Committee<sup>9</sup> item 19 on the agenda was to discuss the streamlining of the councils own organisation of its Housing Work. Proposals were put

forward by the Sub-Committee of the Civil Defence and General Purposes Committee<sup>10</sup> for discussion. The Committee decided to call a special meeting on 14th November 1945.

(a) The Special Meeting of the Housing and Public Health Committee on 14th November 1945. The precise order of events leading up to this meeting are not recorded in the official LCC records; indeed the whole affair has a mysterious and even underhand quality about it. What is recorded are the reports made to the Civil Defence and General Purposes Committee<sup>11</sup> by:

- (1) Eric Salmon, Clerk of the Council,
- (2) Architect to the Council, Forshaw,
- (3) The Special sub-committee of the Civil Defence and General Purposes Committee.

These were the documents discussed at the special meeting.

After discussion the Housing and Public Health Committee<sup>12</sup> resolved:

(1) That the Civil Defence and General Purposes Committee be informed (i) that whilst the Housing and Public Health Committee are generally in agreement with the undermentioned proposals relating to the reorganisation of the councils housing work with the object of increasing the output of housing, the desire to ask the Civil Defence and General Purposes Committee, before finally recommending the Council, to consider whether a Director appointed from outside the service would not be more effective than concentration of housing work in the Valuer's Department<sup>13</sup>:-

(ii) That recommendation to the following effect be submitted to the council.

(a) That the operation of standing orders 272 (duties of Chief Engineer) and 273 (duties of Architect) be suspended as far as necessary to enable the following recommendations (b) to (g) to be dealt with.

(b) That the Valuer be designated Director of Housing and Valuer and be the Chief Officer solely responsible for carrying out the council's housing operations, including all such work at present undertaken by the Chief Engineer and Architect. (Except as regards (i) the preparation by the Architect of typical plans and (ii) electrical work and specialist advices by the Chief Engineer on

drainage).

(c) That the architect do remain responsible for preparing and submitting to the Housing and Public Health Committee from time to time as required by them and after consultation with the valuer typical housing plans which on approval would become the general standards which the valuer would follow in preparing individual schemes.

(d) That the Valuer be responsible for advising at what stage any new standards submitted by the architect under the foregoing resolution (c) can be adopted without detriment to the flow of new building.

(e) That the Valuation, Estates and Housing Department be renamed the Housing and Valuation Department and that the fixed staff of the Department be temporarily increased by one position of Assistant Director of Housing with a basic salary of £1,200 - 75 - £1,500 a year, and one position of Housing Architect with a basic salary scale of £1,100 - 50 - £1,250 a year.

(f) That the staff in the Chief Engineer's and Architects Department now engaged on the duties mentioned in (b) subject to the exceptions specified, be seconded to the Housing and Valuation Department.

(g) That the arrangements referred to in the foregoing recommendations (a) to (f) be made for an experimental period of three years in the first instance and be reviewed before the end of that period.

(ii) That the domestic practice of consulting a Medical Officer of Health about layout, density and internal arrangements of housing schemes be discontinued, save in any exceptional case in which the valuer thinks that construction would be desirable; and (2) that it is also suggested:

(a) that proposals (i)(c) should be amended by the deletion of the words "and after consultation with the valuer".

(b) that proposal (i)(d) should be amended to read as follows:

That the Director of Housing, who will be given an opportunity of making observations upon any typical plans submitted by the architect under the foregoing resolution (c) be responsible for advising at what stage any such new standards can be adapted without detriment to the flow of new building.

(c) That a new recommendation should be included as follows:-

That the Director of Housing, when submitting to the Committee his report or plans for any housing scheme do, if the Housing Architect so desires, submit also a separate report by him on any architectural aspect of the scheme.

Signed W.C. Gibson<sup>14</sup>  
Chairman of the Housing Committee.

The text of the resolution (i) a-g is identical to the proposals submitted by the special sub-committee of the Civil Defence and General

Purposes Committee which was prepared at a meeting on 29th October 1945 and chaired by Lord Latham. These proposals in turn followed the suggestions of the Clerk of the Council, Salmon's report. Therefore apart from the minor amendments included in 2 (a)(b)(c), which do little to soften the blow to the architect, the Housing and Public Health Committee adopted in full the proposals of the Clerk, Salmon. The amended proposals of the Committee were presented to the full Council on 18th December, 1945. After a debate as to whether there should be only a single person in charge of housing there was a count; the Housing and Public Health Committee's proposals were passed by a vote of 41 to 35.<sup>15</sup>

Forshaw had therefore at a single stroke lost complete control of the Council's post-war housing programme to the Council's Valuer, Cyril Walker. This astonishing manoeuvre requires detailed examination.

The reports presented to the Housing and Public Health Committee's Special Meeting will be analysed individually to illustrate the main arguments put for and against the new proposals.

(b) The Chief Clerk to the Council's report to the Civil Defence and General Purposes Committee. Salmon put forward no real case in his report for the need to reorganise the control of housing in order to achieve greater output. Rather he merely stated that "the first requirement is an undivided responsibility". That is, to have one Chief Officer with all responsibility from site <sup>C</sup>acquisition to construction and finally to letting and maintenance.

He further stated that as the Valuer already had most responsibility (a point which Forshaw hotly denied) it made sense to give him total control, and then transfer staff from the Architects' Department, and

creating the new post of Housing Architect.

Salmon gave no details as to why the specialised departments working together should be any less efficient than his proposal of one new large single unit. It is important to stress this point because it suggests that the real reason (although left unstated in the official records) is to remove control from the Architect. The Valuer and Engineer are said by Salmon to agree with his views, and so back up the notion of a campaign against Forshaw by the Clerk, the Valuer, and the Engineer.

(c) The Architect to the Council's report to the Civil Defence and General Purposes Committee. In his report Forshaw starts by stating his conviction "that any change of the organization of the work however drastic, should be undertaken if it would increase the Council's output of new housing in the immediate future".

That Salmon's proposals were already prepared and written is confirmed by Forshaw's reference to, and rebuttal of them, in his next statement: "After the fullest consideration, I am convinced that the proposals would not achieve the declared aims". It therefore appears that Salmon had drafted his proposals with the knowledge and agreement of the Valuer and the Chief Engineer before Forshaw became involved. Forshaw peevishly remarks in his introduction "It seems unaccountable that the architect should not have been consulted earlier considering he is the officer most directly concerned with output". It therefore becomes difficult not to suspect some form of conspiracy by the Clerk and the Valuer against Forshaw.

In the light of subsequent developments Forshaw's argument against the proposals seems particularly strong. In his second section he lists

the number of plans and contracts for completed schemes and for proposed schemes, totalling some 29,330 dwellings. In order to show his Department's commitment to the development of a housing programme capable of achieving a rapid and improved output, he mentioned the work already done on eleven new type plans including the development of a 3-storey house, new construction methods, and the use of modular measurements facilitating the future use of prefabrication.

The implied insult to himself and his department contained in the proposals is countered with the threat that RIBA and ABT members would have serious objections to the proposals.

More importantly, in his third section he discussed the implications for town planning of such a reorganization, in which the specialised activity of the Architect and Planning Officer required to implement the County of London Plan (accepted by the Council in July 1944) would be abandoned. "If we proceed by any other methods we are right now throwing over the principles and methods of the plan...and with that our faith in the plan". This is followed by two examples of recent planning errors committed by the Valuer.<sup>16</sup>

Forshaw interprets Salmon's proposals that "the Architect's advice as regards design and construction should be dispensed with entirely..." as an unbelievable suggestion that would put the control of housing into the hands of the Valuer who was not himself architecturally qualified.

To the astounded Forshaw only one option lay open : that of direct attack. In section 6 of his report he therefore suggests three alternative proposals. These were either to:

- (1) transfer all functions except site <sup>6</sup>aquisition to the  
^



architect<sup>17</sup> "it will be essential in my opinion to constitute a self contained Housing Branch (under a principle architect) organised and built up in unit divisions".

or (ii) the architect has responsibility for design and layout and the Valuer that of erection

or (iii) the Ultimate Plan: Appoint architects as heads of sub-Departments responsible for housing, schools, hospitals etc. and forming an Architectural Board under the Chairmanship of the Architect to the Council.<sup>18</sup>

He concluded by making three final points

- (1) that the Architects' Department had done all possible to prepare for all post-war rebuilding.
- (2) the Department would be capable of doing the task if proposal (1) implemented, and
- (3) only the Architect could co-ordinate both planning and design.

Forshaw's report is therefore in total opposition to Salmon's, and puts forward a diametrically opposite counter proposal. The fight was therefore quite clearly a (two cornered) battle between the Architect and the Valuer.

(d) The Valuer. The Valuer, Cyril Walker, had only been appointed on 18th December 1944<sup>19</sup> (Herbert Westwood the Valuer to the Council had died that July). The Minutes of the Civil Defence and General Purposes Committee of the 10th October 1944,<sup>20</sup> records the Committee's decision that the advertisement for the post of Valuer should state that the candidate "should be a valuer and surveyor and have experience of estate management and be capable of acting as the Council's chief advisor on housing".

There were forty-six applicants, fifteen were interviewed and four of them recommended to the Civil Defence and General Purposes Committee for further interviews. Of the four, Cyril Walker, aged 55, and Borough Valuer of Croydon was chosen.

Walker's career structure was as follows: in 1919-24 he was an Assistant in the City Engineers Department (Housing and Town Planning department), Leeds. From 1924 to 25 he was the Housing and Town Planning Assistant, Preston, and from 1925 to 30 the City Estates Surveyor, Norwich, and from 1930 to 35 he was Housing Director, Bolton. His technical degrees were Associate and Fellowship exams of the Surveyors Institution, and he was a Licentiate of RIBA.<sup>21</sup> Walker's experience was therefore in public offices where housing design and layout were not controlled by an Architects' Department but by a Chief Engineer with no architectural qualification.

The appointment of Walker to Valuer of the Council on 18th December, 1944 as a "man capable of acting as chief adviser on housing" therefore anticipates a reorganization of the control of the Council's housing work. Therefore, the Civil Defence and General Purposes Committee must, even as early as December 1944, have had plans to relieve Forshaw of control of housing, and in the appointment of a new valuer deliberately chosen Walker, a very forceful man with several years of experience of working as a Chief Housing Director.

(e) The Decision of the Special Meeting of the Housing and Public Health Committees. The justification for a change in the control of housing purely on the grounds of speed and economy seems somewhat doubtful. It appears rather to have been a battle of personalities and policies. The Clerk to the Council (Salmon) the Chairman of the Housing Committee (Gibson) and members of the Civil Defence and General Purposes Committee were in effect expressing a loss of faith in Forshaw's progressive ideals in design and planning. It seems that they had bitten off more than they could chew in his appointment: new experimental type plans including

3-storey terrace houses, new methods of construction, and all controlled and planned in neighbourhood zones of fixed density, interspersed with areas of large open spaces. This policy as expressed in the County of London Plan of 1944<sup>22</sup> was to be brought into effect by an Architects' Department, reorganised to work as a series of equal teams, which were to replace the existing and traditional, hierarchical, pyramidal organisation.

All this perhaps appeared, in the context of immediate post-war London, as far too optimistic and idealistic, and what is more, both time consuming and expensive. The forceful traditional no-nonsense attitudes of Walker<sup>23</sup> must have had their attractions in the corridors of County Hall. However the final count of forty-one to thirty-five in the Council's debate shows that in the end it was quite a close run race.

For Forshaw it was impossible to continue working in the Architects' Department with the major part of the rebuilding programme taken away from him. The decision had not only personal repercussions for Forshaw who resigned immediately, but also repercussions in the architectural profession as a whole which saw the Council's decision as a major slight against them. Indeed Forshaw's threat that RIBA and ABT members would be displeased was quite correct. A deputation of RIBA and ABT members presented a petition to the Civil Defence and General Purposes Committee opposing the Council's decision to give control of housing to the Valuer. Details of this petition unfortunately do not survive.<sup>24</sup>

(f) The Director of Housing and Valuer, and the new organisation. The decision of 14th November 1945 to give complete control of housing to the Valuer, Walker, now renamed Director of Housing and Valuer, meant a considerable reorganisation of his department.

Walker's Chief Assistant Valuer, J.E.J. Toole, became the Deputy Director of Housing, and two new supervisory posts of Assistant Director of Housing (a supervisory role for which I.I. Ungar was chosen) and a Housing Architect (to supervise the technical work and act as chief Architectural officer) were created. Two other officers of divisional rank were also appointed to the new department: the Divisional Engineer, R.D. Walker, and the Principal Quality Surveyor, R.F. Miller.

The Civil Defence and General Purposes committee decided not to advertise the post of Housing Architect outside the department. There were six internal applicants for the job<sup>25</sup> and on 28th January, 1946 Sidney Howard was appointed. Howard had been acting senior architect in the Architects' Department and was now seconded as Housing Architect to the new Housing and Valuation Department, and with him the staff from the Architects' Department who had been working on housing.

The Housing division under Howard was organised to provide detailed supervision by three senior architects, and under them, apart from sections dealing specifically with planning, heating and ventilation, structural engineering and advisory services, there were twelve section architects each with his own team of up to twenty-one assistants. This was then increased in 1948<sup>26</sup> by enlarging eleven of the sections into twenty-two sub-units, so that one architect Grade I was in charge of two sub-sections of one architect GI, two GII and seven or eight technical assistants. This change was intended to give the Grade I architects more time to spend on architectural aspects.

The new department therefore embodied three very important changes: (i) in the manoeuvre Forshaw had been eliminated from the LCC's housing work and subsequently from the LCC altogether (ii) Walker, the new

Director of Housing and Valuer, now held complete power which had previously been entrusted equally to the Architect and the Valuer and (iii) the consequence of which was that architectural responsibility had been subordinated to the Valuer. As well as this reduction in 'real power', the Chief Architectural Officer had effectively changed from Forshaw, holding the highest office of Architect to the council (salary £2,500 - £3,000) to Howard, the new Housing Architect, who before the change had been acting Senior Architect (salary £800 - £1,100) but who was basically still an Architect Grade I (salary £660 - £780).

The effects in terms of design, of this reduction in architectural control of LCC Housing, will be dealt with in the sections analysing housing output. Structurally however (the decision which was for an experimental period of three years, extended in 1948<sup>27</sup> to four years ending on 1st January 1950) drastically reduced the architectural and planning power and input into the housing work. The quality and direction of the work was now limited by the quality of Howard as an architect and co-ordinator.

(g) New appointments in the Architects' Department. Forshaw's resignation of the 3rd December 1945 left the top two posts in the Architects' Department vacant. The post of Architect to the Council was advertised in December. Salmon, Clerk of the Council, with the chairman of the General Purposes Committee, selected eight candidates for interview from the thirty-seven applications.<sup>28</sup>

Sent with the application form was a list of the architect's new duties so that no confusion over the issue of housing would result. It stated:

The duties attaching to the position of Architect to the Council are as may be prescribed by the council from time to time. At present they include;

- (1) Work other than housing.
- (2) As regards housing - preparation of standard type plans of houses and flats.
- (3) Installation of heating and ventilation systems.
- (4) Superintending Architect of Metropolitan Buildings.
- (5) Advice on all Town Planning matters.
- (6) Construction Licenses on Public places.

The applicants represented an interesting mix of architectural outlook and experience ranging from S.H. Loweth who had worked with Gilbert Scott, Lutyens, and Lethaby; to F.A.C. Maunday's continental travel and experience; to Godfrey Samuel who had a 1st class BA(Oxon) in Philosophy, Politics and Economics and who had been a founder partner in 1930 of Tecton, and a member of the Mars Group and a CIAM delegate; to R.H. Matthew who Abercrombie described in his testimonial: "there can be hardly any of the young architects in England or Scotland who have greater experience in housing and town planning than you have or greater ability as an architect".<sup>29</sup>

The choice was therefore quite wide; the two applications from the Architects' Department, Williams and Kenard, representing the traditional local authority architect; the older generation represented by Loweth and Meredith; the new intellectual and avant-garde architect represented by Samuel and lastly, a sort of compromise of a young (actually, the youngest of the applicants) architect who had researched into modern European architecture but also had experience with local authority housing and planning represented by Matthew. The General Purpose Committee decided to recommend the last.

Before considering Matthew's background in more detail it is interesting to study Edwin Williams' application. It is of interest

because his application, like Matthew's, contains a testimonial by Abercrombie whom he had studied under at Liverpool. Both of Abercrombie's testimonials stand out from the rest as they are addressed personally to Matthew and Williams,<sup>30</sup> rather than to the chairman of the General Purposes Committee. Williams' testimonial is an odd mix of personal praise and an outburst against the policy of the Council. Abercrombie wrote:

My dear Edwin Williams, I believe that you would uphold the twin functions of Architect and Planner to the council. There is an immense task before you requiring not only vision but continual vigilance if the standard of architecture is to be raised and the principles of the plan are to be put into execution. As you know I deplore the fact that housing has been taken out of the Architects hands, but whether the decision is right or wrong, it is the duty of the Chief Architect to make it work as the living conditions of the people are the chief end; I am sure if you are appointed you will see that neither architecture nor planning suffers and that you will carry on with the work, courageously and successfully.

Of course, Abercrombie had a vested interest in "the plan" because he was co-author with Forshaw, but it does seem rather undiplomatic of him and not very encouraging for Williams,<sup>31</sup> chances to suggest that if he were appointed he should and would see that "neither architecture or planning suffered". That is effectively oppose, and hence try and reverse, the decision of the Council which gave the Valuer control of Housing. This was a confrontation the council clearly hoped to avoid after only a few months of the existence of the new Housing and Valuation Department.

Matthew's architectural training and experience was a mixture of the theoretical and the practical. He obtained a Diploma in Architecture from Edinburgh School of Architecture in 1930 and then went into his father's practice, Lower and Matthew, from 1931-1934. This was followed by a two year research period at Edinburgh Town Planning School to study

the replanning of Edinburgh, as well as housing in Holland, Germany and Scandinavia. He then entered the Department of Health for Scotland in 1939, becoming deputy Chief Architect in the Town Planning division in 1941, and in 1943 Deputy Planning Consultant for the Clyde Valley regional planning committee.<sup>32</sup> He has also spent three months in Sweden in 1945 studying the possibilities of prefabricating timber houses. It is the mix of academic research and a practical training in a large government department that made Matthew the obvious choice for the post of Architect to the council.

The post of Deputy Architect to the Council, salary £2,000 - £2,500, was however not acted upon until June 1948. After advertising fifty-one applications were received, seven of which were chosen for interview on 12th July 1948.<sup>33</sup> J.L. Martin, MA., D.Phil., FRIBA, Principal Assistant Architect to British Railways (formerly London Midland Region) and 39 years old was appointed. The General Purposes Committee Minutes<sup>34</sup> used the phrase "we propose with confidence the appointment of Dr. Martin". The addition of the word confidence was not normal for job recommendations and so it must be assumed that the committee were exceptionally pleased with Martin's application and appointment.

Again the inside candidates (Williams and A. Ling tried once more for promotion) were passed over in favour of an outsider bringing a new background and field of experience into the department. Martin's background, as summarised on his application form<sup>35</sup> was as follows: Martin obtained a B(arch), MA., and Ph.D all from Manchester University. He was a RIBA Soane Medalist (as a prize winner at RIBA Martin became acquainted with Matthew who had the year before won a RIBA prize). Matthew was therefore already familiar with some of Martin's work prior



to his application<sup>36</sup>) and by 1948 a FRIBA. From 1930-1934 he was an Assistant lecturer in Architecture, Manchester University, and from 1934-1939 the Head of School of Architecture, Hull. His building experience before then was limited to a few buildings; private houses, a Nursery School at Hartford Cheshire, Stokesley Senior School, North Riding CC., a Youth Centre at Scunthorpe, Lincolnshire, and Amenities Buildings at Scunthorpe Steel and Iron Works. He had also travelled to France, Italy, Switzerland and Spain. His most interesting work was after the war for the LMR (which became part of British Railways).

In his testimonial J. Summerson gave the opinion: "I have long regarded Dr. Martin as one of the outstanding architects of the present time", and W.H. Hamlyn of B.R. not only stressed his "education and learning" that enabled him quickly to grasp and resolve problems but also his work on 'Unit' stations which with its principle of system building had reduced costs.

From this brief summary Martin's background can be seen to include, like Matthew's, academic research work with practical experience in public offices. Points that no doubt impressed Matthew and the General Purposes Committee, other than his academic degrees would have especially been his work at the LMR, in particular Martin's organisation of the office, his responsibility for developing a Research Section, and also for his production of plans for the Unit Station buildings<sup>37</sup> about which Martin had made a short film, later shown to Matthew.

The Architects' Department of the LCC had therefore by 1948 been restaffed with two progressive and exceptional architects, consciously brought in from outside the department by the General Purposes Committee to re-establish the Architects' Department of the LCC as one of the most

modern thinking public offices in Britain.

Meanwhile in 1947<sup>38</sup> the Architects' Department had been further simplified. With its reduced responsibilities the department's Statutory and Construction divisions were replaced by three new groups according to function: (i) Architecture and Planning and Building Control division (ii) Engineering and Survey Services and (iii) Administration and Finance System. At the same time an emphasis upon Town Planning and Schools was made; a schools architect, R. Wilson, was appointed to take charge of a schools division within the Architects' Department and A.J. Ling was appointed as Senior Planning Officer.

The Architects' Journal Campaign, March 3rd 1949 to March 30th 1950.

The decision of the General Purposes Committee of 12th and 26th July 1948<sup>39</sup> to extend the experimental organisation of the Council's housing work under the Director of Housing and Valuer for another year put off the assessment of the results until sometime shortly before 1st January 1950. The Chairman stated that more time was needed to be able to assess fairly the results of the new department. However, if the Housing Committee and the General Purposes Committee were still undecided, the architectural profession certainly had made its mind up about the effect of the new organisation.

The catalyst for the commencement of the campaign against the Director of Housing and Valuer's work seems to have been a small exhibition designed by the Housing and Valuation Department, and shown at Charing Cross tube station from February 7th 1949 for three weeks. The purpose of the exhibition<sup>40</sup> was to show Londoners the problems of housing faced by the LCC since the war, outlining bomb damage and the repairs

necessary to rehabilitate existing property as well as the problems of the lack of material and skilled labour in the erection of new buildings. The huge number of new dwellings urgently needed was also shown. The emphasis of the exhibition was therefore on the number of homes completed under these difficult conditions rather than on the design merits of the schemes illustrated. Approximately 47,400 people attended,<sup>41</sup> including J.M. Richards, House Editor of the Architects' Journal.

Richards' first response to this exhibition, and his first attack on the work of the LCC's Housing Department, was in the form of a radio talk on a BBC 3rd Programme series called "The critics' discussion on London Housing", broadcast on February 27th 1949. His remarks, which acted as an opening introduction to a general discussion, were later published in the Architects' Journal of March 10th 1949.<sup>42</sup> They attacked the LCC's Philosophy of quantity not quality. "It doesn't cost any more to build in the right place than in the wrong place, nor to design well instead of badly. In fact it often costs less. And the small amount of really good work that is being done shows that good design is possible under present conditions".

Richards also mentions the abandonment of the principles of the County of London Plan as a disaster for London and ends with an outspoken criticism of the LCC's Housing and Valuation Department:

But there is too much dreary work, lacking all refinement and imagination, and the worst culprit is the Housing Department of the LCC... As architecture the LCC work is of a depressingly low standard whether you take the grim concrete barracks recently provided for the people of Bethnal Green and Deptford and Islington or the immense scheme now under construction at Woodberry Down, a fine site in North London, now being covered with flats or an ineptness in design and crudity of detail that London shouldn't be expected to put up with in 1949.

Despite their brevity these opening remarks combine the essential elements of the ensuing debate. The area of attack is quite clearly defined as the planning and the design of the newest and largest housing schemes of the Director of Housing and Valuer. The usual excuses of economy and speed made for old designs are refuted and specific examples are given to illustrate what could be achieved. In the same issue of the AJ in Astragal's column, "Notes and Topics",<sup>43</sup> (Astragal was at this time Richards himself) the second programme in the series is discussed. In it Gibson, the Chairman of the LCC's Housing Committee, replied to Richards' attack in the preceding programme. Astragal dismissed Gibson's counter-attack as invalid due to Gibson's refusal to discuss issues of architectural merit, instead concentrating upon the planning policy and its political nature. Astragal again takes the opportunity of making sure the target of attack is clear to the readers and he distinguishes between the Director of Housing and Valuer who was in charge of Housing, and the innocent Architect to the Council.

The battle, for it really did take on the proportions of a full-scale battle, had started. The debate continued in the form of editorials, Astragal's comments, photographs, letters and articles in every subsequent weekly issue of the AJ until July 14th 1949, when its intensity was reduced slightly until the final comment on the 30th March 1950. This constitutes approximately one year of outspoken criticism, which for the first five months bombarded the reader of the AJ with such an unceasing and extensive attack that few pages were left for any other topic. This case was an exceptionally interesting use of an independant architectural journal for a propaganda attack which eventually forces a public authority, the LCC, into action. It therefore deserves considerable attention.

In the next issue, March 17th, the AJ invited readers comments by showing photographs of some of the recently completed LCC work in an article provocatively called "LCC Housing: the need for a critical reassessment".<sup>44</sup> It especially asked for comments on design details, use of materials and site layout. The idea of involving the reader in such a direct way was Richards' means of de-personalising the criticism by offering the architectural profession a chance to air its views. To make sure readers were aware of alternative standards of design a review of flats in Holborn by R. Hening and A. Chitty followed the above article.<sup>45</sup> The contrast could not be more revealing. The "grim" concrete barracks of the LCC work next to the tall 'modern' 10 and 7-storey steel framed blocks of Hening and Chitty forced a comparison and a reaction. The scheme at Holborn met Richards' requirements of a good building on all counts except planning; the density of this scheme he criticised in his broadcast as far too high but said that this was a situation brought about by the demands of the Council's Engineer rather than the architects.

In the issue of March 31st a letter from the Leader of the LCC, I.J. Hayward, was printed.<sup>46</sup> In replying to the recent criticism of the LCC's Housing Work in the AJ Haywood remarked that he considered the debate so far to be biased and misinformed. He pointed to the fact that Gibson's reply, broadcast after Richards', was not printed in the AJ, that the photographs printed were of a very poor quality and taken from unfair angles (to which Astragal later points out that they were nearly all official LCC photographs) and that comments made concerning the LCC's contravention of the County of London Plan were incorrect. Therefore in the interests of fairness<sup>47</sup> he offered to put on an exhibition at County Hall prepared by the Housing and Valuation Department to show fully the

achievements of their work in order that qualified architects with experience in housing could put forward an informed criticism. He also accepted total responsibility for the political decision to use pre-war designs and flat types by the Council and the Housing Committee.

The offer is greeted with great enthusiasm as it officially and professionally allowed for criticism and discussion to be made on LCC Housing which could then be freely published in the AJ. The proposal of an exhibition was without precedent and an act of exceptional openness. This response to Richards' criticism is due primarily to the genuine concern and interest in the architectural quality of the housing schemes taken by both Haywood and some notable members of the Housing Committee, especially Evelyn Dennington, the new Vice-Chairman<sup>48</sup> of the Housing Committee. The offer, together with the suggestion that "the views expressed after such an examination would be valuable"<sup>49</sup> also encouraged the hope that reactions to the exhibition would not only be looked at carefully but also acted upon. Richards could not have wished for more.

From the issue of March 31st to that of 5th May, the attack was sustained in the Letters Column which was completely dedicated to letters relating to the LCC's Housing work. The article 'LCC Housing - a special announcement' in the May 5th issue,<sup>50</sup> proclaimed the opening of the exhibition at the LCC on May 4th and urged all readers to visit it and to reply. In the interests of impartiality "this verdict must come from a responsible but impartial jury, and the Journal feels that such a jury can appropriately be sought in the list of members of the council of the RIBA".<sup>51</sup>

The proposed use of the RIBA Council as a jury was perhaps a slightly risky one on Richards' part, as out of the list of RIBA Council

members only J.H. Forshaw, Maxwell Fry, Frederick Gibberd, F.R.S. Yorke, Colin Penn, were known 'modernists'. In fact this proposed jury did not reappear in the following issues of the AJ. Out of the list of twenty-nine council members only four had their replies printed; Maxwell Fry (and Jane Drew), Howard M. Robertson, and Colin Penn writing critically of the LCC's Housing Work; and only John Swarbrick writing in praise of the LCC.

Two interpretations can be placed upon this. The first, that the other council members declined the invitation because they did not wish to professionally compromise themselves<sup>m</sup>. The second is that the editorial body of the AJ was prejudiced and did not wish to publish letters in favour of the LCC. Evidence for the first is obtained in Astragal's column and leader articles in which he is at pains to encourage the idea of a free criticism, and to establish a tradition of open criticism of contemporary architecture. In so doing he alludes to the architect's trepidation in openly criticising a professional colleague's work and that such an act was unprofessional. Furneaux Jordan's letter in <sup>the</sup> May 26th issue of AJ<sup>52</sup>, also discussed this prevailing attitude in the profession.

Evidence for the second may be suggested by the fact that of sixty-seven letters published only four are not openly critical. These are Hayward's and J.E. Delenses' letters which are noncommittal, and Prof. A.E. Richardson's and J. Swarbrick's letters which were the only two letters published that were positively in favour of Walker's work.

Richards' and the AJ's decision not to mention the impartial jury after its first suggestion in the 5th May issue must be read as primarily due to the first interpretation. To suggest that Richards was biased in

his selection of letters printed is improbable. The letters published which are critical of the housing work come from a very broad range of architects, not just students or young, recently qualified architects, but also from more established architects. Professional opinion was very unified in its overall condemnation of the work as inferior and poor. This point was made at the time by Granville Pyne's letter in the AJ issue of June 2nd 1949.

Following the increasingly insistent demands by Astragal for readers to visit the exhibition, opinions from architects start to be published from May 19th onwards. The main issues and arguments presented by this mass of literature can be summarised under the following headings:<sup>53</sup>

General Criticism of the designs' details of both (a) elevations and

(b) layout, with some suggestions for improvement.<sup>54</sup> Nearly every letter started with a general criticism of the schemes exhibited (only photographs, plans and working drawings were shown, and most architects replying were probably unfamiliar with the completed buildings.) This took the form of either a blanket criticism of all the work, or in some cases references were made to specific aspects of schemes. Among criticisms of the elevation and plan types the features most commonly attacked were: use of materials, stylistic treatment of blocks, balcony design and positioning, use of access balconies, interior layouts especially corner rooms where windows were awkwardly placed, the use of pitched roofs and the roof's relationship to the top of the lift tower. Among criticisms of the layouts, schemes were attacked for closely regimented parallel spacing, no thought given to light fall or light direction, no landscaping or space between blocks except tarmacked areas, and for not adhering to the principles suggested in the County of London



Plan. Some letters suggested improvements in these areas: in the light of subsequent developments in design the most significant were the letters<sup>55</sup> which recommended a look at Swedish examples. For example, I.A. Colquhoun recommended the use of (1) flat roofs with a generous overhang (2) open not solid balconies and (3) the use of large picture windows.

Public Office Organisation.<sup>56</sup> The most significant issue touched upon by a great many writers was that of the nature of the organisation of the architectural office. There was a great debate going on in the whole profession as regards the merits of the traditional hierarchical organisation of both public and private offices, and whether a new system of smaller more independent groups would offer a working environment more conducive to encouraging architectural talent.

Several letters suggested that the poor quality of design was directly attributable not only to the imposition of the old flat types on the architects by the Housing Committee and Walker, but also to the stifling effect of a large public office (containing 200 or more architects) organised in an hierarchical and pyramidal way. In other words, the architects themselves were not wholly to blame.<sup>57</sup> Some letters went so far as to suggest that for an improvement in design standards it was essential for the control of housing to be returned to the Architect of the Council.<sup>58</sup> This issue of offices organised on the 'group' principle was taken up by the ABT and the discussion of it was continued in Keystone and the AJ until the end of 1949.

The Lack of any Research and Development.<sup>59</sup> Many writers expressed their amazement at the constructional methods still used by the Director of Housing and Valuer, namely brick loadbearing outer walls.<sup>60</sup> This was

criticised from two angles: (1) that modern methods of construction would improve the utilization of internal space and also generate a more meaningful stylistic result based upon functional premises and (2) that such methods would also produce better results for less money. The suggestion was therefore that the LCC could well afford to spend time upon development and research and to set up a section for this purpose in the Architects' Department.

Good design need not cost more. In answer to Gibson and Hayward's argument that old designs were used for reasons of speed and economy, several letters<sup>61</sup> pointed to other public authorities work (usually work employing private architects) to show that under the same conditions others could produce some lively results. The flats in Holborn by R. Henning and A. Chitty were frequently cited.

Public Office work can be of a good quality. Some letters referred to the example of the designs for the new Concert Hall on the South Bank, which Matthew and Martin were currently working on and which had already been illustrated in the AJ, in order to show that large public offices, if staffed with architects of sufficient calibre, could produce excellent results.<sup>62</sup>

A general dislike of the 'Flat' as a unit for living in. Three letters<sup>63</sup> were not only critical of the flats detailed design but also attacked the concept of the 'flat' as a suitable unit for urban living. They saw the flat as a particularly European and French type and thought it totally unsuitable no matter what architectural form it took.

A Political interpretation of the design policy. Only two letters<sup>64</sup> implied a political reading of the poor design of London's housing. They

acknowledged that high land costs caused authorities to build in high densities and that for economic reasons the cost of enlisting architectural advice was cut by employing a valuer or engineer for the preparation of designs. It led then to question the amount of money available for housing: "If we can afford the best obtainable guns for sending people into the next world, surely we can afford the best obtainable flats for people hoping to remain in this".<sup>65</sup> A more detailed political attack was pre-empted by the fact that the Government and the LCC were under Socialist control and that their policies therefore were known to be, at least in principle, aimed at the provision of good public authority housing.

A comprehensive survey of all the main issues involved in the debate could therefore be found in the Letters column of the AJ. This was supplemented by a series of articles that took the form of editorial leaders, Astragal's "Notes and Topics", special articles and reports from meetings in the 'Societies and Institutions' column. These included:

- |                           |   |   |
|---------------------------|---|---|
| 1949 March 31st, page 303 | : | R. Furneaux Jordan and P. Shepheard's paper on "What kind of Architecture do we want?" given at a meeting of the SCR. |
| 1949 May 5th, page 401-2  | : | A. Ling. 'Planning for People', a paper given at a meeting of the IUS.  |
| 1949 May 19th, page 449   | : | Editorial leader on Architectural Criticism.  |
| 1949 May 26th, page 471   | : | Editorial leader on Public Architecture and Public Opinion.   |
| 1949 " page 476           | : | A Pictorial review of the LCC Exhibition.   |



these issues during this period, March to December 1949, and the more conservative journals, The Builder and The Architect and Building News, kept on the periphery of the debate.

The exhibition of the LCC's Housing Work, on view from May 4th to May 19th had produced exactly the response Richards had hoped for: an overwhelming critical response and in terms of votes - if the published letters are considered as election return slips - Richards' 'critical party' had won by a huge majority of sixty-three to four. The Leader of the Council, Hayward, and the Housing Committee could be in no doubt about the architectural profession's attitude towards their housing work under the Director of Housing and Valuer.

The LCC's architects and employees were prohibited by standing orders from replying personally to criticism of their work. Therefore the only weapon left open to them for a counter attack was the use of an official LCC publication. This took the form of the LCC pamphlet Housing: A Survey of the Post-war Housing work of the LCC 1945-49.<sup>66</sup> The text was by W. Segal and had been taken from articles that had appeared in the journal Building. It was published in June 1949 and so just missed the LCC's exhibition.

The pamphlet is foreworded by Hayward, it is an interesting statement ambiguous in its meaning and non-committal in its judgement. Central to it is the theme of change of both the type and style of housing. Housing, he said, must always be governed by principles of good taste, but the "good quiet manners of today may be out of vogue tomorrow". Change is also attributed to the factors of money available and materials and methods developed. Hayward ended by declaring that nothing must hold up the provision of houses, but that they must be the

best the money will buy. This foreword is certainly not as explicitly favourable to the Council's work of 1945-49 as Walker would have wished. Nor is Gibson's preface, which includes the odd but perceptive (and rueful) remark that "housing has come to be identified to a special degree with architecture".

Segal, a known author on the merits of modern design (Astragal refers to his book Home and Environment as a "ray of hope"<sup>67</sup>) however, makes a better job of at least sounding enthusiastic about Walker's housing work. But it is remarkable for a 'modern' architect, in 80 pages, to make no reference to architectural aspects of the housing. Allusion is made to the open mindedness of the architects and their adoption of new ideas, but apart from a few basic comments upon layout and the use of the 5-storey blocks no points are made about the 'style' of the buildings. The text is no more than a list of details of the numerous schemes illustrated. There seems to be a conflict of interests between Segal's agreement to write the text (or allow the articles to be reused) and his unwillingness to venture any comments as to the architectural quality of the work: comments that in the light of his other writing would have been of a critical nature. The reasons for Segal not wanting to be critical of the Housing Department's work are uncertain.

Facilities and methods of construction were briefly outlined. The rubric heading the section of 'Construction and Material' claims the few examples "show the open minded and progressive attitude of the Council to the problems and requirements of building at the present time". The examples were a system of concrete flooring (the Perfora system) and the use of monolithic concrete at Woodberry Down. Neither could be described

as progressive in the least.

The Director of Housing and Valuer's counter-thrust compared to Richards' and the AJ's is superficial and lacks weight or authority. Presented with these two documents (if the AJ articles can be described as such) the Housing Committee and the LCC had no other option than conceding that in design terms their post-war housing, 1945-49, was of a very low standard.

One question remains to be considered regarding the AJ's campaign. How spontaneous a reaction was Richards' first criticism of the LCC's housing work and is there any evidence to suggest a collusion of any kind between Matthew or Martin (or any other member of the Architects' Department) and Richards? No official trace of any campaigning by Matthew to regain control of housing prior to 1950 exists. Matthew seems to have totally avoided any contact with the new Housing and Valuation Department and did not make use of his limited powers of interference in design matters that the resolution of the Council in their decision of 18th December 1945 had allowed for.

That he would desire the return of housing, which had the largest programme and budget and was the area of the Council's building work that carried the most prestige, is without doubt. He was also an <sup>c</sup><sub>A</sub> acquaintance of Richards. However, Martin maintains<sup>68</sup> that no such direct link between the two existed. This view is supported by the length of time between Matthew's appointment and the start of Richards' campaign. It is perhaps more probable that encouragement, if there was any, for Richards to criticise the LCC's work came from Walker's department itself. The two letters<sup>69</sup> printed in the AJ from architects who had worked in Walker's department illustrate the feeling of frustration and discontent

that existed among some of the architects there.

The London County Council's response to the AJ's campaign.

(i) The Special Meeting of the Housing Committee 2nd December 1949. The public debate regarding the LCC's housing work described above was, as Hayward had suggested in his letter to the AJ in March 31st issue, taken note of by the LCC. By October the temporary reorganisation of the Council's housing work was again due for reassessment. As on 5th November 1945, the General Purposes Committee asked for reports from (1) the Architect to the Council, Matthew, (2) the Clerk of the Council, now Howard Roberts and (3) the Director of Housing and Valuer, Walker. The General Purposes Committee also submitted their own observations and recommendations in the memorandum dated 21st November 1949, presented to the Housing Committee on 23rd November 1949. As before, the Housing Committee (at their meeting on 23rd November 1949) decided to hold a special meeting called for 2nd December 1949. They also requested further details and elaborations of the first reports from the Architect, Clerk, and Director of Housing and Valuer. This special meeting, with Gibson as chairman and Evelyn Denington as Vice-chairman, after a discussion of the first and second reports,<sup>70</sup> resolved:

That the Committee are of the opinion that the Architect should be made responsible from 1st January 1950 for the initiative of all new housing schemes...on the understanding that the restoration to the Architect of his former responsibility for housing architecture will not adversely affect the flow of housing production, and that the General Purposes Committee be informed.

In other words, the committee agreed upon a housing policy based upon architectural standards rather than numbers and tradition. The details of the arguments put forward by the Clerk, the Architect and the Director of Housing and Valuer were as follows:



(a) The Clerk of the Council's Report. Roberts as Co-ordinator and individual responsible for overseeing the inter-departmental relationships was again asked for his views by the General Purposes Committee. Roberts' report started by giving a list of three alternatives:

3(a) to leave the present organisation intact,

3(b) to revert to the former arrangements. "It is perhaps questionable whether the Committee would wish to revert to an arrangement which distributed between three departments the responsibility for design and erection of housing schemes".

3(c) to transfer to the Architect responsibility for the Council's housing architecture, and if a decision to follow 3(c) were taken then it could be (i) done overnight or (ii) from 1st January 1950 with all new housing becoming the responsibility of the Architect.

Roberts added that he considered the last option, 3(c)(ii), to cause the minimum of interference to the Council's housing output and that it would probably take two years to finish the work already started in the Housing and Valuation Department. The report therefore allows for all eventualities and leaves a rather open verdict. The stress is definitely laid upon the third alternative with a preference for the second option 3(c)(ii), but Roberts did not openly say that this is the course that should be followed. This is in contrast to Salmon's report of 1st November 1945 which had been positive in its decision to recommend the reorganisation of housing under Walker. The new debate was, officially at least, of a completely different character, far more diplomatic and sophisticated.

(b) The Architects' Report. Matthew's report was a masterpiece of

understatement and has the underlying feeling of a man who knows he has already won. It is relatively short and the first section rapidly runs through Roberts' three alternatives. The first would not affect him, the second seemed silly and the third with its first option, 3(c)(i), would seem to be abrupt and would disrupt the production of housing. He also stated that he didn't want to take over the Director of Housing and Valuer's work. The second option 3(c)(ii), he said "seems to be a practical method, if the Council should so desire it, by which I would be able to assume greater responsibility for the design of housing".

After this rather humble statement of his willingness to accept control of housing under alternative 3(c)(ii), Matthew took the opportunity of briefly stating his requirements if this were to be the Council's decision. These were:

While I anticipate that a preliminary period of a few months would be necessary for the preparation of new designs, I would expect, provided that adequate staff of the quality required is made available, to be able to develop a programme of schemes to a timetable that would fit in with the Council's requirements. Without any hiatus in total production I would require at once for the preliminary work at least one architect of high standing and ancillary staff. Unless this initial staff is of high quality there is little hope of attaining the standard of design which the Council will desire...

Matthew's report shows that he had already been informally asked what he would do and require if he was given back control of housing.<sup>71</sup> The phrase "the standard of design which the Council will desire" shows that the real issue of this debate is about the quality not the quantity of the housing work, unlike the 1945 debate which was more concerned with numbers and personalities. Matthew made quite clear his terms for this new agreement, and was in a position of power to be able to demand them. Unlike Forshaw, who had basically demanded the same changes, Matthew now

held the trump card. He was the only man and department that could provide the Council with what they had been forced to accept as an essential element in their housing policy: high architectural standards.

(c) The Director of Housing and Valuer's Report. In contrast to Matthew's report, Walker's is a long and desperate plea for keeping his rôle as Director of Housing and Valuer. It is presented in two parts, the first is an argument for why it would be unwise to make any changes and the second an outline of what would be best if they did again change the organisation.

The first section of the report is revealing concerning the 1945 decision: "It was directed away from the architect...because of the need for the greatest possible output and because there was already evidence of delay due to a disposition to subordinate production to the Town Planning considerations of the County of London Plan". This substantiates the earlier interpretation of the Forshaw/Walker battle in which Forshaw's idealism was seen as an obstacle to output which made Walker's more practical building experience seem a better alternative.

Walker neatly summarised his view of the situation concerning the public debate in part 4(v) as follows:

A change made in the present circumstances would unsettle the large body of architectural staff now enjoying the confidence of their present chief under whom they have loyally co-operated with gratifying and remarkable results.

An appreciation of these circumstances will make the point clear. Members may know that during the last year or so the quality of the design and finish of the Council housing work has been the subject of much vocal criticism. Some of that criticism may be informed but much of it in my view, is prompted by - or at least unconsciously derives from - professional interest and springs from the conviction that the council was wrong in 1945 (to quote from the former architect) "to transfer the work to a department untried in this field and unqualified professionally". If this was much to the

fore when the Council entrusted me with full housing responsibility, it should cause no surprise that it has again made itself felt three years later on the review of the 1945 decision the form it has taken has been as one might expect - a criticism of the architectural work of the department. Consequently a decision by the committee to continue the present housing organisation would be a vote of confidence in the department; conversely the transfer of architectural responsibility to the Architect just at this time would be interpreted as a decision that the department's work was deficient.

Walker therefore went as far as to suggest that Richards' and the AJ's campaign was prompted by professional interest and that much of the criticism was biased and not well informed. The inference is that the architectural profession were out to take control of housing for personal gain only.

Part (vi) suggested that an immediate transfer would adversely affect output because the Architect would be unsatisfied with the designs already submitted and wish to change them. Points 4(vii), 4(viii) and 5 conclude Walker's analysis of the situation and are worth quoting in full:

4(vii) What are the facts about the design of the Council's housing work? That it follows no flights of fancy! That it has regard (as many recent non-council schemes do not) to subsequent maintenance requirements and avoids extravagant but unenduring finish; but principally that it is conservative in taste and adopted perhaps too long the pre-war standards of design - standards set in the Architects' Department. For the first mentioned factor I must accept responsibility, for the latter, that must rest with the Housing Committee, whose decision (reported to the Council 20.11.45, p.1141) it was that in interests of speed and production pre-war standards and design should be followed in the first instance.

The dwellings now in construction, on the other hand, are of better design and finish; these have been worked out in full by the present staff who will have cause to regret if they are to be judged by past decisions made by others rather than by the quality of their present work.

4(viii) even better quality work can be obtained from the existing staff...if the Council desires it and is prepared to pay the cost (as it would in any event have to pay if the suggestions in paragraph 4 of the Clerk's report is followed)... They could then devote that extra time to greater variety of planning and design (involve

additional constructional costs) and no doubt meet informed as distinct from prejudiced criticisms.

(5) Finally I would say that I know, as no one else can, how much the housing work has benefitted by being under the direction of one man. I know the condition of the work when it came to me: it is now vastly different, vastly better and capable of great things... Indeed, I make bold to say that if the Council's aim is the production of good and numerous dwellings the present organisation is the best that can be devised to secure it.

The points Walker made need no further elaboration. His reports outspoken analysis of the situation places no blame whatsoever on himself or his department. In Walker's eyes, he and his department stood for all that was required for the production of 'good and numerous dwellings'.

In the second part of his report he briefly acknowledged the proposal 3(c)(ii) as the most practical. The conclusion to his report appealed to the Housing Committee in terms of an unbiased dedication to the people of London: "I am convinced that any change of organisation at this juncture cannot fail to damage the progress of the work of providing homes for those who so urgently need them".

(d) The Second reports. These three initial reports were supplemented for the special meeting of 2nd December 1949 by a further report from each of the three parties concerned.<sup>72</sup>

The Clerk of the Council's Second Report. The Housing Committee asked for replies to three questions which were (1) what would the liaison between the Architect and Valuer be (2) would the Architects pay attention to maintenance and (3) what were the comparable arrangements in Birmingham, Liverpool, and Manchester. These therefore show the Housing Committee's worries about the consequences of proposal 3(c)(ii).

The reply to question (1) stated that this would be as before, which

had previously been satisfactory. (2) That they would be concerned with maintenance as it reflected their design and efficiency. (3) That Birmingham's housing was under the City Engineer, Liverpool's under the Architect who designed, maintained and advised on site <sup>C</sup>acquisitions, and at Manchester the City Architect was not involved in housing.

The answers to (1) and (2) therefore discounted fears that a reorganisation would present difficulties in terms of site <sup>C</sup>acquisition and maintenance and to (3) that in other authorities both Architects and Chief Engineers controlled housing.

The Architect's Second Report. Matthew amplified his earlier report, emphasising that the development of research and new techniques would become united in one department that also contained housing and planning. The need for new high quality staff was again stressed, and that it would not be acceptable just to return some of the seconded architects from the Director of Housing and Valuer. Matthew and Martin considered that none (with one or two exceptions) of Howard's staff were of a high enough quality. Matthew clearly defines what he wanted in part (12):

I will require the Principal Housing Architect to be a man who can organise, inspire and lead an effective division. He must be an experienced architect of fine architectural perception and of convinced principle in relation to contemporary standards of design, and must be able to negotiate and explain technicalities to laymen. The Assistant Housing Architect (Design) will be complementary to the Principal Housing Architect. He will be primarily concerned, in close contact with myself and the Deputy Architect, with the creation and direction of design. On the quality of these two men will largely depend the success of the whole organisation. If men of quality recognised as such in the profession, can be obtained in the first place, the difficulty of obtaining subordinate staff will be much reduced, as I have recently experienced.

In point (13) and (14) Matthew also stated the need for the best advice on technical matters from outside consultants and for all the

architects to be qualified by examination.

The creation of the two new posts of Principal Housing Architect and Assistant Housing Architect was to be achieved with salary scales higher than their rank would normally allow, so as to attract "men of quality" who were to be the key to the development of the new department. The emphasis upon architectural skill, diminished in the move from Forshaw to Howard, was in Matthew's proposal to be raised by an injection of two of the best available progressive architects. The excitement and potential of such a proposal in the light of the public debate of the LCC's Housing work must have been extremely difficult for the Housing Committee not to acknowledge and be affected by.

The Director of Housing's Second Report. Walker again criticised the Architect's report and refutes the idea that better design, new construction methods and standardisation could only be achieved in the Architects' Department. His attempt to discredit his opposition is again clearly spelt out: "the primary aim of the Council's housing activity - to provide real homes at reasonable cost - may be subordinated to town planning idealism and contemporary architectural trends". He also adds that many of the delays already encountered by him were due to the delay at the Town Planning Stage and that the Town Planner disregarded the urgent need of homes. His other hobbyhorse of the maintenance problems accompanying modern building techniques is also restated: "I could not recommend the acceptance of projects however artistically conceived if they offend the canons of good management and are likely to prove expensive either in construction or maintenance".

The opposition of the architect/idealist to the engineer/builder of the 1945 debate was once more re-enacted in that of December 1949. The

circumstances surrounding the two occasions are in many ways remarkably similar. The need for sheer numbers was still as urgent in 1949 as in 1945, for Walker's total output of 20,195 dwellings had made little impact on the initial target of 100,000 homes. The issues being debated were also extremely similar. If Forshaw's proposals and ideas are compared to Matthew's, they can be seen to overlap considerably: new type plans, new construction methods, new ideas of planning and layout, new office organisation based upon group working.

The differences are more telling. The major charge was that the architectural profession had become more organised and now had a progressive mouthpiece, with a clearly defined attitude to the architect's rôle in society. These ideas had been formed into a manifesto in the pages of the AJ which could be read and discussed. The personal idealism of Forshaw that had once been extremely easy to dismiss, had been converted into the credo of an entire profession.

The possibility suggested by Walker that his organisation could continue and adapt to the new demands of design does not seem to have been seriously considered by the Housing Committee. The debate, based upon principles rather than mere practicalities, meant that a solution had to be one that would physically show the shift to a new policy based upon architectural principles. The debate took on an almost symbolic nature. The Architect therefore came to stand for a new society based upon the principles of a Welfare State. Modernity and change were the key concepts embodied in this personification. Walker on the other hand had become imbued with the principles of conservatism, tradition and the past. There could be no intermediate situation between these two poles, and at the meeting of the Housing Committee of 2nd December 1949 it was



the turn of the Architect to get his chance to show the LCC what a new idealism could produce. The full Council passed the resolutions recommended by the Housing Committee, in December, officially initiating the creation of the new Housing Division in the Architects' Department.

The New Housing Division in the Architects' Department, 1950-56.

Matthew's demands for his new Housing Division were duly acted on. Advertisements for the new posts of Principal Housing Architect and Assistant Housing Architect were placed in January 1950, and interviews followed in February and March.

The post for Assistant Architect was dealt with first and of the seventy applicants<sup>73</sup> four were chosen for interview; T.A.L. Belton, J.H. Whitfield Lewis, C.T. Penn and M.C.L. Powell.

Lewis was offered the job but declined the appointment on the proposed terms. He had made a simultaneous application for the post of Principal Housing Architect, and so presumably was advised at his interview that he stood a good chance of obtaining that post and waited for the next interview. The second choice was Powell who did accept. Powell was a predictable second choice, his main experience was with his brothers practice of Powell and Moya and for their work on the Westminster City Council's Pimlico Housing scheme. The career details as stated on his application form were as follows: he obtained a BA from Cambridge University 1934-37 in Architectural Studies. This was followed by two years, 1937-39, studying at the Architectural Association, obtaining the Architectural Association diploma in March 1940. In April 1946 he formed a partnership with his brother Philip and in June 1946 Hidalgo Moya joined them forming the firm Powell and Moya. This firm had

three competition awards (i) June 1946 Pimlico Housing Westminster County Council Section I, Section II 1949. (ii) Technical College Peterborough - August 1947 specially recommended and (iii) First prize in Competition for a vertical feature for the Festival of Britain. Work built by 1950 was limited to Pimlico Housing, Section I, and two houses in Chichester.<sup>74</sup> They had also acted as Consulting Architects for a new system of construction for council houses in 1949, and in 1947-48 he had been a part-time instructor at the North London Polytechnic.

Powell's background was similar to Matthew and Martin's: that is, academic training and research followed by experience in public authority work. Powell's association with the Pimlico Housing Scheme, one of the most progressive large post-war housing schemes, and his part in the development of new systems of construction, made him the ideal choice for Assistant Housing Architect whose main responsibility was for the designs of new types plans and new construction techniques. His age, 33 years old, places him in the group of architects trained just before the war at a progressive architectural school, who had not had much opportunity to implement their new ideas in actual building work. They therefore entered the new key jobs in public authorities with both a strong desire to build and with a whole new outlook and approach to the design of council housing. In this way an earlier generation of architects (if they survived the war), who had worked their way up in a public office before the war, were effectively displaced from jobs of responsibility.<sup>75</sup>

The interviews for the post of Principal Housing Architect, for which there were forty-seven applications,<sup>76</sup> took place on 6th March 1950. Five applicants were interviewed<sup>77</sup> and H.J. Whitfield Lewis was chosen.<sup>78</sup> Lewis's background is worth describing as it again highlights

the new type of architect that Matthew was concerned to appoint.'

Lewis took a diploma course in Architecture at the Welsh School of Architecture in Cardiff from 1928-33. Although the course was traditional Lewis followed contemporary ideas. He worked as an assistant to J. Emberton, FRIBA in 1933, and in 1933-34 went to W.E. and S. Trent and designed Cinemas (his RIBA Final thesis had been on the 'Modern Cinema'). His Honorary mention in the RIBA Victory Scholarship of 1934/5 for a design for a boarding school for girls, which was the only contemporary solution submitted, was published in the RIBA Journal of February 1935. This was seen by Erich Mendelsohn who offered Lewis a job in his London Office. In 1935-36 Lewis became the senior assistant to Erich Mendelsohn and Serge Chermayeff and worked on the Bexhill Pavillion and a house in Church Street, Chelsea. In 1936-38 he became Chermayeff's Chief Assistant when Mendelsohn left and was responsible for the detailing of Chermayeff's house at Halland, Sussex. In 1938 he left to become Senior Assistant with the firm Norman and Dawbarn. After the war he returned there, becoming an Associate in 1948. His responsibility was for housing which included: St. Pancras Way Housing, NW1 for St. Pancras Borough Council,<sup>79</sup> Greenwood Road Housing, E8, Hackney Borough Council,<sup>80</sup> and Royal College Street Housing, N16, Hackney Borough Council.<sup>81</sup>

Lewis's career up to 1950 shows a broad experience in both modern housing techniques and design. His position as Associate with responsibility for housing in Norman and Dawbarn showed that Lewis could fulfil admirably the set of requirements that Matthew had laid out in his report.

With the two key posts filled, Matthew and Martin went about choosing other young architects to form the working nucleus of the new

department, preparing in the first six months new type plans and block forms.

Among these first appointments were the architects Colin Lucas, Rosemary Stjernstedt, Oliver Cox and Cleeve Barr. Lucas and Stjernstedt as more senior and experienced architects held the posts of 'Architect in Charge' for the first major projects of the new department. They came from quite different backgrounds as the details of the C.V.s presented to the Establishment Committee<sup>82</sup> make clear.

Lucas studied architecture at Cambridge from 1925-28, and then formed his own building firm to study the use of concrete, of which he was a director from 1928-33. In 1934 he joined up with Con<sup>n</sup>all and Ward, which was one of the key Modern Movement practices in Britain in the 1930s. During the war he worked in several research departments of the Ministry of Works before applying for the post at the LCC.

Stjernstedt trained at Birmingham School of Architecture and School of Planning and Research and then left to work in Sweden (with her Swedish husband), first as an architectural assistant in the Uppsala County Architect's Office from 1939-40, then as planning assistant in the County Architect's Office Stockholm from 1942-43 and Gothenburg from 1943-45. After the war she returned to Britain and worked as a Regional Architect for the Ministry of Health from 1946-48 and then as Senior Architect for the Stevenage Development Corporation from 1948-50.

Lucas therefore offered experience of the use of concrete as well as a background in Modern Movement aesthetics, whereas Stjernstedt offered experience in working in Sweden's progressive Socialist Local Authority Housing and Planning Departments. The influence of Lucas' and

Stjernstedt's interests on the new departments housing output will be assessed in section 2.3.

By July 1950 the structure of the new department had been provisionally established.<sup>83</sup> Under Lewis and Powell were a Development and Research Section to formulate new methods of design and construction (with outside professional advice on structural engineering, heating etc.) and architectural teams of up to about twenty members under the guidance of an architect Grade I. The first objectives were (i) to prepare a series of new type plans, and (ii) the development of new flat types.

The Research and Development Group was to be maintained as a small group within the housing division. Architects from the architectural teams were allowed to spend time in the research group to resolve problems that arose during the course of particular schemes. In this way the Group was kept very much involved with the development of each new scheme and so did not become an isolated team working on theoretical and technological ideas that could not be implemented. This flexible staffing and emphasis upon experiment meant that ideas could be quickly tried and evaluated, and the results used to determine the next line of development. Oliver Cox and then Cleve Barr were the architects most closely associated with the Group.

The number of architectural teams was increased as work on new schemes demanded. At the beginning of 1951<sup>84</sup> the number of production teams was increased from three to four, each with one Architect Grade I, two Architects Grade II, four Architects Grade III and fifteen Technical Assistants, giving a group of twenty-two. The leader of the new fourth group was made a principal architect and was expected to liaise between

the Research and Development Group and all four teams. The teams of twenty-two were more flexibly run than in Walker's department. Far more responsibility was given not only to the team leaders by Lewis and Powell but also within each group of twenty. The imposition of an aesthetic direction to follow was not part of Lewis's policy. Good quality work, no matter what its aesthetic character, was never rejected. Lewis<sup>85</sup> only twice insisted upon alterations to an architect's work, using his power of veto on the team working on Alton West who wanted to use black bricks. Lewis insisted upon the use of red bricks so that there would be, at least, a material link between the East and West schemes. On the same scheme where the architects wanted (in a Brutalist fashion) to expose the floor slabs on the end wall of a 4-storey block of maisonettes, he also refused to allow it for similar reasons.

This flexibility of the team units was even more essential when in 1953 the staff seconded to Walker's Department were transferred back. Architects working on block dwellings were transferred to the new Housing Division on 1st January 1953<sup>86</sup> and architects involved with the cottage estates were all transferred by the end of 1953. Thus in January 1953 Lewis's staff increased by about two hundred architects, many of whom were considered by Matthew and Lewis to be of a poor standard. The grouping of them into units of twenty produced eight new units. In this influx of old staff the shortage of good designers<sup>87</sup> was compensated for by placing some of the new younger architects within these groups. Under Lewis's direction a new inexperienced member could be given more architectural responsibility than his rank or length of service would normally have allowed. The acceptance and recognition on the part of some of the older architects of the greater architectural skill of some of the younger architects, allowed a balance to be achieved between new

ideas and practical experience. The adoption of a flexible group system therefore combined experience in dealing with actually building large housing schemes and with young architects given freedom to experiment and try out their new ideas. This system, which Forshaw had wanted to introduce in 1945, was largely responsible for the success of the new department.

The structure of the department by 1953 had taken on its final form in the history of the LCC. Bar variations in numbers in the department as a whole, and hence in the number of teams and numbers within the teams, this structure lasted until the formation of the GLC in 1965. The department was in effect rather more like a series of (approximately 20) small independent practices than one large department run and controlled by one man. The effect of this in terms of the design ideas and aesthetic content of the output of the department was of course tremendous. This departmental structure will be seen in the sections on design analysis, to have played a major part in the variety of ideas coming out of the Architects' Department Housing Division from 1950-1956.

#### Reactions in the AJ to the change in the LCC's policy.

The news of the Council's decision to transfer responsibility of housing back to the Architect was first announced in a small insert in the issue of 29th December of the AJ.<sup>88</sup> The news was enlarged upon in the 12th January issue by Astragal under the heading "The world's biggest housing job".<sup>89</sup> Astragal commended the LCC's decision but suggested that a salary of £1,500-£1,700 for the Principal Housing Architects' job would hardly be likely to attract many architects of a high standard, especially as employees of the Council were not allowed to continue their own private practices. The editors in the same issue stated that the

decision was not a personal attack upon Walker but a political decision.

Matthew's idea of starting a new department from scratch with new architects coming in from outside the LCC, brought with it the rather delicate problem of how to carry this out without offending the staff in the old department. This proved to be impossible. The staff seconded to the Housing and Valuation Department considered that they had come off very badly from the Council's decision, and hence vented their anger against Richards and the AJ who they saw as the instigators of this "journalistic stunt" and the cause of the loss of confidence in their work. Astragal in his column in the AJ of January 20th,<sup>90</sup> refers to a meeting and report of the old staff who had even instructed their Staff Associations' Solicitors to take action against the AJ.

The rather undiplomatic handling of the situation within the LCC had created a very bitter response in the old staff who felt betrayed. No matter how many pages the AJ spent putting over the notion that unbiased criticism was essential for the maintenance of high standards in contemporary and especially public architecture, the old staff still felt the victims of a political manoeuvre. These were the problems enlarged upon in a letter from R.E. Shrosbree, Secretary General of the ABT, published in AJ March 30th, 1950.<sup>91</sup> Shrosbree pointed out that (1) the staff were only seconded to the Housing and Valuation Department (2) the idea that new architects would produce better architecture ignored the structure of the organisation. In other words, the old staff, given the right conditions, could produce better results and (3) that no training was given for low grade staff. The ABT suggested that (a) there should be no dismissals, (b) the staff should be informed of their future and transferred (c) the pyramidal structure should be abandoned, and (d) part



time training should be arranged. In fact this is what eventually did happen, and by the end of 1953 all the seconded staff had returned to the Architects' Department. This letter in the March 30th 1950 issue of the AJ closed the debate on the LCC's housing work which had started the year before (in the March 10th issue 1949) with Richards' first critical statement. The development of this debate, whether seen as a 'cause célèbre' for the Modern Movement, or as a journalistic stunt prompted by professional interest, highlights the major issues occupying the architectural profession in the late 1940's.

P A R T   I I

## 2.1. LCC HOUSING: THE FORSHAW PERIOD 1939-1945.

During the period of Forshaw's employment at the LCC, from the 9th March 1939 to his resignation on the 18th December 1945,<sup>1</sup> no new housing schemes were built. Nonetheless Forshaw played an important rôle in the development of LCC housing policy, for this was by no means a period of inactivity.

While Forshaw was Architect to the council, from June 1941 to December 1945, there occurred the great wave of planning proposals, drawn up in preparation for the reconstruction of Britain that was to follow the cessation of hostilities. With Sir Patrick Abercrombie, Forshaw was co-author of the County of London Plan, which was to be a blue-print for the reconstruction of London. This plan had obvious implications for the LCC's Housing Committee in the formation of their post-war policy.

This section will therefore concentrate on the content of this plan, and the attempt by Forshaw to implement its proposals in the context of LCC housing. At the time of his resignation the main housing scheme that Forshaw was working on was the Woodberry Down Estate.<sup>2</sup> In this estate Forshaw attempted to follow the County of London Plan's proposals, and to develop it as a model 'neighbourhood' unit. This estate was therefore seen by the LCC Housing Committee as an experiment to try and develop a 'model' for all subsequent housing work. The development of the plans for this estate will therefore be followed through in detail.

As a preface to this the pre-war housing policy of the LCC will be considered.

LCC Housing Policy, 1930-1939: In-county Estates.

The effect of making subsidies available only for slum clearance in the 1933 Housing Act encouraged the building of high density housing of minimal standard in the form of 5-storey flats on in-county estates, leaving other flat and house types to be provided by private builders. A typical example of a "1933 Housing Act" estate is Honour Oak Estate, Lewisham,<sup>3</sup> on a site of nearly 30 acres. It was planned in 1932, the last year before Topham Forrest retired as Chief Architect, and building started in 1933 and was mainly completed by 1937. It was built at a gross density of 169 persons per acre with twenty-five 4-storey blocks containing 1,103 dwellings (plate 20). From about 1921 there had been a reduction in the minimum house standard and the 'simplified' type of dwelling had been developed: that is, tenements which were not self-contained, a communal bath was shared by two or three flats, rooms were only 8 feet in height (not 8' 6") and of a reduced size. The bedrooms opened out onto the living room and there was a reduced standard of finish, concrete not plaster on the walls, bare bricks in lobbies and kitchens, woodwork stained rather than painted, and no laundry or drying facilities. The layout followed the LCC practice of fronting blocks onto roads and forming rectangular layouts with courtyards in the middle covered in tarmac<sup>4</sup> (plate 21). Four blocks in the first year were of this type and fourteen in the following two years were of a modified 'simplified' type. That is eighteen out of a total of twenty-five; the remaining blocks were of the 1934 types. The neo-Georgian façades fronting the roads (plate 22) were therefore a mask for a utilitarian design approach, which attempted to hide behind this austere respectability the problems of financing the building of working class housing.

Estates very similar to this continued to be built right up to the war. However with growing opposition to this type of estate by the mid 1930s, and with the changing economic and political conditions, pressure was brought to bear on the LCC to make changes in their housing policy and design. These occurred in the period c. 1935-1939 when E.P. Wheeler was Chief Architect to the council.

The first notable change was the attempt by the Housing Committee to 'modernise' their 5-storey tenement blocks. The best example of this is Oaklands Estate, Clapham.<sup>5</sup> Wheeler's London Housing 1937 manual says of the site: "because of its situation in a pleasant residential neighbourhood, it is specially suitable for housing purposes".<sup>6</sup> The small site, just over 3 acres, (plate 23) was therefore situated in an area where the Honour Oak type of austere neo-Georgian façade, with its association with minimal dwellings for working class families, was certainly not appropriate. The answer was to use what Building described as an:

external elevation [which] exhibits the modern tendency towards a horizontal effect, which is emphasised by the flat roof, external balconies and alternating bands of coloured brickwork. In keeping with the horizontal effect produced by these features, wide windows in steel frames have been introduced and these give a maximum amount of sunlight in the rooms. (plate 23)

The estate which was commenced in January 1935 and completed in June 1936 shows the LCC at its most design conscious before the second world war. The layout, although on similar lines to other pre-war estates with 5-storey blocks linked to give a continuous strip, articulated according to the site's size and shape (plate 24), did have far better planting due to established trees on the road front, and tarmacked courtyards were kept to a minimum and out of public view. A fitted childrens' playground

was also provided, unusual on such a small estate and presumably intended to keep the children from playing and mixing in the surrounding neighbourhood.

The façade attempts to make some form of architectural statement about 'modernism' and therefore asks to be considered in the light of other British and also European developments, especially those in Holland and Germany built in the years directly after the First World War. The comparisons reveal that Oaklands, built using the pre-1934 flat types (with 3-storeys of flats and one superimposed maisonette) with balcony access from the rear façade (plate 25) and with no lifts, was merely a superficial facelift of the standard LCC tenement. This was no experiment in contemporary flat design, it ignored all advances made by the 'Modern Movement' in Europe. This fact was acknowledged and accounted for at the time in Building magazine:

Recently however, there has been a certain half-hearted concession to modernism in the appearance of horizontal glazing bars and rounded angles, together with a tentative featurings of long concrete balconies. These devices, however, are only dimly related to contemporary architecture of the best type, and seem to point to an influence apparently absorbed during the council's official visit to the continent two years ago. A swift re-integration of design is not to be looked for in the work of a municipal authority in England, where change will not come easily or comfortably out of a convention which has taken a generation to crystallize... Modernists will disagree with the solution of a modern problem being visually expressed through the traditional façades of the council houses. Out of such an objection arises the answer: that the practical solution has been reached through years of trial and error and that, so far as regards planning, lay-out and amenities, the council are well ahead, with a few exceptions, of continental practice.

This conservative response to an aesthetic approach to housing which allows "carefully graded lengths of balcony [that] mean unfair distribution of amenities to tenants" was seen by the author as an unnecessary and peripheral concern for councils building working class

houses, and one that had primarily been inspired by a visit to continental schemes. Here we have what amounts to an outline of the pre-war values of the LCC Housing Committee - that is, (1) the reliance upon a gradual evolutionary and empirical development of housing design based upon traditional and tested means: a non-radical, conservative approach to design and technique, and (2) a lack of interest in the final look of the housing except in special cases; an emphasis on content (ie accommodation calculated by the cost per room) rather than style.

However by the later 1930s it was evident that the council was slipping well behind the more adventurous housing schemes in Britain, and Oaklands, as a face lift on a pre 1934 type was very regressive when compared, both in terms of content and style to either Livett's Quarry Hill scheme for Leeds City Council, planned in 1932 and mainly completed by 1938 with a new industrialised method of construction, provision of lifts for all flats, the Garchey refuse system and other communal facilities planned for, but in the event not provided on the estate, or Kensal House, Ladbroke Grove designed by Maxwell Fry in 1937 and built of reinforced concrete construction, well serviced mechanically, and with private balconies and some communal facilities.

The second change to be noted occurred in 1936, and was the development of "new flat types".<sup>9</sup> This was a reaction to the criticism of the conservative nature of the Council's work<sup>10</sup> and an attempt to more systematically analyse the new requirements of housing and to try out newer solutions to answer them. The first problem was to redesign the flat types<sup>11</sup> to provide more amenities than contained in the four 1934 types I to IV,<sup>12</sup> most notably the provision of a staircase access type which it was hoped would give greater comfort, greater privacy and reduce

shadowing to back rooms caused by the overhanging access balcony. The only other changes were to provide private balconies to most flats (as recommended by the Ministry of Health Circular in connection with the 1935 Housing Act), provide a dust chute for every 8-12 dwellings instead of every 30 dwellings, and give a slightly higher standard of finish and equipment. The different types were all based on one basic format with a standard dimension between staircase wells, the space between being divided into combinations of two or three flats of either 1,2,3,4- or 5-rooms each. (plate 26)

An interesting comparison can be made between this 'new type' and the winning entry in the Cement Marketing Company's competition of 1935 to design working class housing by Lubetkin and Tecton.<sup>13</sup> The competition, aimed ultimately at advancing the use of concrete construction in Public Authority housing and hence the Cement Marketing Company's entry into a very large and lucrative area of the building market, was in many ways comparable to the conditions and restrictions constraining Wheeler and the architects at the LCC, thus making the comparison especially valid. In fact the entry requirements were chosen specifically, by the Cement Marketing Company, to match those conditions prevailing in local authorities so that the estimated cost of each scheme that was submitted of 5-storey blocks on a site of 4 acres would be exactly comparable to show savings, if any, over traditional techniques already employed by most local authorities. These conditions, which specified backboilers and made no provision for central heating, central laundries, nurseries or shops, were used by critics, especially one writing in the Daily Worker,<sup>14</sup> to show how low the standards were for working class housing. The Tecton scheme, although never built, was used by the Daily Worker, ATO and others as a paradigm for new housing in the



late 1930s.<sup>15</sup>

The comparison between this projected scheme by Tecton and the LCC's 1936 new type (of which only two such blocks were built, as an experiment before the war started, at the White City Estate (plate 27); in the finished scheme it was intended to have 312 dwellings of the new type compared to 1,974 of the 1934 types) is as follows:

Internal Layout: Both schemes adopt the staircase access type (projecting as a curved stairwell extension in the LCC and only slightly in the Tecton scheme) with standard spacing between stairwells allowing subdivision into combinations of 1,2,3,4 and 5 room dwellings. Both have recessed private balconies on the opposite façade to the stairwell and both schemes relate the kitchen and the living room to the balcony. The Tecton scheme in using monolithic concrete construction paid careful attention to housing servicing ducts internally and used reinforced pilotis to allow a more open and different ground floor plan, with a recessed covered walkway leading into an inner lobby with the stairwell on the far<sub>A</sub>side. These entrance areas and walkway fronts were envisaged as being planted and so brought the green verdure of the surrounding area right into the flats. No such attention to siting and entry was made in the LCC scheme.

Façade treatment: Elevations and models of the Tecton scheme<sup>16</sup> (plate 28) and an axonometric view of the LCC new type<sup>17</sup> (plate 29) allow a comparison of façade treatment to be made. Tecton's use of reinforced concrete allowed for greater freedom of façade treatment: the ground floor was recessed and supported by pilotis which removed the weightiness of the ground to wall junction. Also at both ends the ground floor was stopped short allowing for a clear view right under the block.

The rectangularity of the long block, apparently hovering above the ground floor, was further enlivened by a different plan to the top floor in the middle two sections, where the stairwell breaks through to the roof and continues horizontally to form a continuous balcony in the middle. The opposite façade is also similarly disrupted by a recessing of the top floor giving another continuous balcony strip. The regularity of the window to balcony patterning on the balcony façade, and the window to stairwell patterning of the stairwell façade are therefore both formally enlivened by Lubetkin's fine compositional skills as at Highpoint I and II.

In contrast, the LCC block was not an essay in the International style, and adhered to the banded brick and curved glass aesthetic of earlier Dutch and Art Deco styles. The use of traditional construction techniques gives Wheeler and his architects less freedom. The block sits firmly on the ground on a deep white concrete plinth; this horizontality is repeated in a thinner concrete band at first floor level. This is the only formal device to break up the regular window to balcony pattern on the balcony façade and on the stairwell façade the horizontality is offset by the vertical feature made by the stairwell with wide curved windows, adding a vaguely streamlined effect. The other elements that make reference to modern architecture<sup>ure</sup> in the LCC block are (1) the use of glass bricks in the balcony floors to allow light through into the living rooms below, (2) metal casement windows and (3) concrete balcony fronts with metal tube handrails.

Layout: Both projects illustrated the intended principles of layout to be used. The Tecton scheme shows four blocks axially arranged N/S for maximum sunlight penetration. To offset this rigid spacing the large

area between the blocks is shown informally planted, with the provision of tennis courts: that is an emphasis upon light, physical fitness and leisure in the garden areas, all particular preoccupations of the Modern Movement. The relationship to the broader community is not shown although an area for a possible site for shops is shown. The new LCC layout principles (plate 30) also arranged the blocks axially, larger blocks are N/S with smaller blocks E/W, creating on a rigid grid road layout enclosed central areas between rectangular blocks laid out as communal gardens with trees formally arranged at corners and at either side of entrances.

The two projects can therefore be seen to be addressing the same problems and in some instances using similar solutions. The main differences however are in technique and aesthetic outlook, both of which relate to Tecton's more progressive attitude towards the new technique and imagery of the European Modern Movement of the 1920s and 1930s. The Tecton scheme also illustrated how a radicalism in technique was allied to a political radicalism and why it was seen as a suitable 'ideal', to be aimed for by the Daily Worker and other radical groups.

The LCC's neo-Georgian façades were used more for reasons of economy (ie lack of ornament, mass produced standard wood sash windows etc) and for their associated imagery, which was firmly historically located and established as an image of authority and order, rather than for any purely stylistic or aesthetic reason. There was no possibility that a Housing Committee, containing non-architectural members, could or would wish to use ratepayers' money to make what would most probably have been seen as an expensive experiment to build new blocks in an aesthetic that was both of limited appeal, in that it was primarily in the 1930s

only directed at an international architectural élite,<sup>18</sup> and politically contentious in that an International style aesthetic was associated by some with socialism and communism, and in a material which was still in the experimental stage.

Further evidence of the LCC's uncritical aesthetic attitude is illustrated by Lewis Silkin MP, Chairman of the LCC Housing Committee who in March 1937, gave a lecture on 'Working Class Housing in London' to a meeting held by AASTA at Caxton Hall. Whilst discussing the three main problems of London's Housing - slums, overcrowding and unsatisfactory housing - Silkin took to the defensive by stating:

the fundamental fact that must be considered in providing new working-class housing was that one must provide not what architects thought people ought to want, but what they actually did want. It was possible to guide and educate people a little, if they were unconscious of the fact that they were being guided, but it was impossible to effect immediately complete changes in their way of living (for example automatically to abolish coal fires in favour of other forms of heating)...<sup>19</sup>

This offers an undiluted apologia for the conservatism of the Housing Committee by replacing the restraint on options, caused by the political and financial condition of state housing (which later in his speech he acknowledged as a consideration that overrides all others), with the prejudices and unwillingness for change of the tenants. This patronising stance is all the more dubious as the LCC made no definite census of "what [the tenants] actually did want". The reluctance for other forms of heating, alluded to in the speech, were more likely to stem from the tenants' knowledge that such luxuries would have to be paid for by them. This rebuff to AASTA members, of trying to force architectural avant-gardism down workers throats (despite its justifiable criticism of some of the Modern Movement's architecturally deterministic

attitudes towards the relationship between Modern architecture and an abstract notion of modern man) was therefore countered by Silkin by an espousal of paternalism and conservatism.

The third and final point alluded to in Silkin's speech was the important introduction of new planning policies for (i) complete redevelopment of slum areas, eg White City and Tulse Hill, and (ii) the building on either open sites or developing sites where large houses and gardens had once stood. The latter was said by Silkin to redistribute London's population by reducing densities in slum and overcrowded areas and increasing densities in other residential areas. The former concept of total redevelopment of areas was contained in the 1935 and 1936 Housing Acts. The purchase and replanning of the White City grounds, of some 50 acres, for housing under the 1935 Act, is the first example where the LCC attempt to use these new planning policies.<sup>20</sup> (plates 31 and 32)

Therefore in the immediate pre-war period the LCC Housing Committee only made minor changes to its housing policy: (i) a superficial modernisation of façade treatment, (ii) the development of a new experimental flat type of staircase access and (iii) the development of site layout principles capable of organising blocks of flats over sites of up to 50 acres. It therefore failed to experiment with new techniques of construction, new building types or with Modern Movement ideas or aesthetics.

#### LCC Housing Policy 1939-45.

(i) An outline of Forshaw's Design and Planning Policy of 1942 and an analysis of his rôle in the immediate Post-war Housing Programme:

Forshaw's first major statement as Chief Architect, on LCC housing policy

was in the joint report to the Ministry of Health's Central Housing Advisory Committee, the Sub Committee on the Design of Dwellings.<sup>21</sup> This evidence, prepared jointly by Forshaw, the Valuer and the Chief Engineer, was discussed and passed by the Housing Committee at the meeting of 15th July 1942 and was after accepted as official LCC policy. The contents of the report will be analysed and compared to the policy of Wheeler of the late 1930s.

The introduction broadly outlines the council's aims:

to emphasize the importance of proper control to ensure that the materials used, construction and planning, are of proper standard, and also that healthy surroundings, adequate travelling facilities with the likelihood of local employment, shall govern the location and development of the future new estates to ensure that the homes of the people shall be such as to help them to lead a happy and healthy life.<sup>22</sup>

The emphasis upon total social planning for the 'people', rather than the mere provision of a quota of habitable dwellings, is the first indication of Forshaw's real interests, and the element of the report that most strikingly contrasts to the council's pre-war building activity.

The following discussion, under the five headings of (1) design-aesthetic effect, (2) planning internal arrangements, (3) layout, (4) standards of construction and (5) equipment, reveals little that was innovatory or problematic for the council to agree to. The discussion on cottage estates is of little interest, reading very much like a reinterpretation of Garden Suburb ideas, even with allusions to the picturesque in detailing and planning. The discussion on block dwellings starts with a consideration of 'design-aesthetic effect', which shows the greater priority Forshaw was giving to the architectural form of the Council's housing. Other than cost, the main aim was "to avoid monotony

and any semblance of an institution". This criticism of earlier LCC work as resembling 'institutions' is rather an oblique reference to the design of LCC housing in the period 1930-39 discussed above. The solutions offered by Forshaw, (constrained by the opinions of the Valuer and Chief Engineer in this joint report), were of a very watered down 'Modernism':

Design-aesthetic effect: Monotony was to be avoided by

(i) Roof Line: The heights of the buildings were to be varied to break a continuous roof line. Roof treatment was also to be varied by the use of both pitched and flat roofs.

(ii) Orientation of Buildings: In the past blocks had been placed parallel or at right angles to existing streets. This was still necessary to get high density on small sites, but on larger sites a N/S orientation was better to get the maximum of sunlight. This also allowed variety of orientation in relation to the street.

(iii) Elevational Treatment: Vary the colour of bricks and architectural features. Use external sun balconies and window boxes. Use stone dressings, vary window design by size, shape eg bay, and material used, ie wood or steel.

(iv) General: Provision of trees and grass in the forecourts.

The above outline of Forshaw's ideas on design and aesthetic effect show little that was very radical in nature, for most of them had already been included in the Oaklands Estate.

Other points raised in the report were:

Planning, internal arrangement:

(i) External: 4-storey blocks were considered better unless economic or other factors imposed 5 or more storeys. Access; internal

staircase was preferable although more expensive. Dust chutes, like the Garchey system used at Leeds, were to be preferred. Sun balconies should be recessed to avoid overshadowing and their position varied to avoid monotony.

(ii) Internal; The living rooms should face south and west and be next to the kitchen. Kitchens should be either large enough to eat in or small with eating area in the living room. Lifts should be installed in flats of over 4-storeys.

Layout: Orientation of blocks N/S or if not possible, some smaller blocks W/E at the end of the N/S blocks, but separate. Density between 40-50 dwellings to the acre, depending on facilities. Grassed courtyards with road and turning space. Amenities such as shops, community centre, crèche playgrounds etc on larger estates.

Standards of Construction: Pay regard to thermal insulation properties, fire resistance, sound proofing qualities and appearance and maintenance costs. Pitched and flat roofs acceptable if properly constructed. Rendered walls undesirable in cities. Experiments into alternative methods of construction should be financed by the Ministry of Health.

Equipment: Look into central heating and hot water systems, although they would give the tenant less control than individual gas/electric or solid fuel systems.

The report, a guide to the Dudley Committee on the standards in use by the LCC, therefore contained no real advances upon the best pre-war standards of the New 1936 type developed by Wheeler for experimental use at White City. Forshaw indicates only a limited architectural variety in use of building type and says little directly concerning aesthetics.



The question of further advances in design and technique for post-war housing were not discussed again until later in 1942. On November 4th 1942<sup>23</sup> a preliminary discussion of post-war housing was initiated by Forshaw at the Housing and Public Health Committee meeting and it was resolved that the architect should be authorised to commence "the institution of research in the use of new materials and new methods of layout and design" by setting up a small development group within the department. This allowed Forshaw to pick out a few of the more enlightened architects working in his department during the war, thus to a certain extent side stepping the hierarchical structure of the department.

Following this meeting a joint report by the Clerk of the Council, the Comptroller, the Chief Engineer, the Valuer and the Architect was produced.<sup>24</sup> Discussion of it was twice deferred until the meeting of 17th March 1943. The report 'Housing after the War - General Policy and Preparations' clearly outlines the rôle Forshaw and his new <sup>se</sup> research team had been allotted by his fellow officers in the task of immediate post-war housing. The joint report decided upon the following general principles:

- (1) That all energies be devoted to the building of new houses rather than conversion and repair, and the repair work to be given to the Borough Councils.
- (2) The idea of temporary houses was rejected as they tended, as after the first world war, to stay permanently.
- (3) Housing should be in harmony with the London Plan without impeding output.
- (4) Plans should be prepared during the war.
- (5) Land should be bought in preparation - it was estimated that houses

for approximately 100,000 people would be needed at a cost for the land of £20 million.

(6) Simplification - for speed they would use the 1934 I and III types and the 1936 types only. Therefore only one detailed plan could be used so that only individual foundation plans for each site would be necessary. Monotony could still be avoided by varying the external finish, and

(7) The Architects' Research Section would only be allowed to introduce "worthwhile" experiments into new schemes.

In the summary of these ideas that were to be debated, three are worth quoting in full:

(vii) Where the architect wants to replan the Committee may consider to what extent, if at all, such replanning is desirable, having regard to the urgency of developing detailed plans for immediate post-war housing,

(x) That except for Woodberry Down Site which forms the subject of a separate report by the architect, the detailed drawings on sites already owned be based on '34 and '36 types.

(xi) and that the architect's experiments only be applied to new sites.

Forshaw was therefore to be tightly restrained from introducing any new ideas in the immediate post-war rebuilding programme apart from the special case of the 40 acre site at Woodberry Down. These general principles in the report were all agreed upon and resolved by the Housing and Public Health Committee at this meeting of 17th March 1943. Therefore the interests and values of the Valuer, the Finance Committee, the Engineer and the Clerk to the Council (that is, an emphasis upon rapid output and a disinclination to experiment with new techniques and ideas) were, due to the organisational framework of the LCC, capable of totally crippling any changes that Forshaw had wanted to introduce for the immediate post-war reconstruction. As fate would have it, at the

same meeting, the memo from the Civil Defence and General Purposes Committee suggesting a review of the staffing arrangements for housing was received and discussed. This review was ultimately<sup>25</sup> to lead to the decision to take control for housing completely away from Forshaw.

Forshaw was in a very precarious position, little conducive for progressive architectural practice. Before following through the development of Woodberry Down it is necessary to consider the principles relating to housing contained in Forshaw and Abercrombie's County of London Plan, and to follow the passage of the proposals through the LCC.

(ii) The County of London Plan. Lord Reith as Minister of Works in 1941 requested the LCC to prepare a reconstruction plan of London with the intention of assisting the Ministry in assessing the methods and machinery necessary for the carrying out of the reconstruction of Town and Country. Forshaw as Chief Architect to the council with the help of Abercrombie and the architects at the LCC set about formulating certain basic principles of urban planning and then applying them to the reconstruction of London: "We conceived our instructions in the widest terms, assuming that new legislation and financial assistance would be forthcoming".<sup>26</sup>

This was not all that was assumed; the frontispiece of a bomb damaged street was annotated with a quote from the Prime Minister, W. Churchill: "most painful is the number of small houses inhabited by working folk which have been destroyed...we will build them, more to our credit than some of them were before...they will rise from their ruins more healthy and I hope more beautiful".<sup>27</sup> The inclusion of this patronizing response to the lot of the 'working folk' was used by Forshaw and Abercrombie as a brief, justifying their aims of the County of London

## Plan.

Abercrombie had stated, in a note to the second edition of his book Town and Country Planning, that the war "bids fair to change the whole economic and political face of existence (leaving only stability in moral and aesthetic values)...".<sup>28</sup> In another context Forshaw had quoted from the Scott Committee report:<sup>29</sup> "it is our firm belief that a vital incentive to the war effort is the presentation of a clear picture of a better world which lies ahead", which became in the County of London Plan: "There must be some plan of action ready to reward the valiant".<sup>30</sup> More pointedly the plan stated:

It is commonplace to say that the war has done much to level incomes. There should be even less discrepancy afterwards, and this should be reflected in the plan, which provides for a greater mingling of the different groups of London Society. It is for this new world foreshadowed in the Atlantic charter, that the Capital of the Commonwealth must prepare itself.<sup>31</sup>

This reads rather like a rewrite of Labour's pamphlet The Old World and the New Society,<sup>32</sup> and the socialist posturing which underpins the Plan's key principles is not surprising considering the authors and contributors political affiliations.<sup>33</sup> However the overt political content of the plan is kept at a minimum, thus broadening its appeal, and making it palatable for the Tory Government who had commissioned it.

The key concepts of the plan were developed to overcome the four major defects of the County of London, namely (a) traffic congestion (b) depressed housing (c) inadequate and maldistributed open spaces and (d) the jumble of houses and industry. The key concepts used were only five in total (1) concept of the community (2) Pyramidal density zones (3) Zoning by function in the community (4) the development of an open space park system and (5) road organisation and type derived from function.

These solutions were not without precedent. Most can be seen formulated into a coherent system of planning in the first edition of Professor P. Abercrombie's only book, Town and County Planning of 1933.<sup>34</sup> In it the concepts of (1) zones (2) communications (3) open spaces and (4) community grouping are all discussed. Abercrombie's pre-war regional schemes, 16 in number between 1923-1935, also anticipated many of the ideas in the County of London Plan.

The concept of the community was the most radical and contemporary of the planning issues. This concept that planning should pivot around the notion of communities as the unit for subdividing urban areas, can be traced back in Britain to a research thesis on 'Social and Community Units' by Arthur Ling, (under Abercrombie's supervision) for the Bartlett School of Architecture, London, during 1936-1938.<sup>35</sup> Ling, influenced by work in America by Perry, looked at the possible definition of urban form in terms of communities. The community was both

- (i) broken down into smaller neighbourhood units arranged around communal public buildings such as a school, library or community centre and
- (ii) combined with other communities to generate larger townships etc.

Therefore the relationship from single house up to the larger urban network was systematically and theoretically analysed and controlled. This concept then became adapted by Maxwell Fry and A. Korn, who Ling met as a member of the MARS group. Due to Korn's interest, Ling's theoretical concept of the community became the basis for the 1938 MARS plan for London, applying the community unit arbitrarily over a totally replanned London. Ling was later invited to join Forshaw and Abercrombie at the ICC to help on the County of London Plan, where the community concept was, with a more detailed survey of London, reapplied to the existing structure of London.

The last chapter in the County of London Plan outlines how the plan could be implemented and gave details of the immediate post-war needs which included, under housing, the reconstruction of Stepney and Poplar as well as "all those schemes which were in hand or had been approved at the outbreak of war provided their construction would not conflict with the plan".<sup>36</sup> The plan therefore represented and put forward Forshaw's ambitions and aims of what he considered to be his task as Architect to the Council.

The chapter on housing in the Plan gave a detailed account of how statistically the proportion of flats to houses could be varied according to different density zones of 100, 136, and 200 persons per acre. (plates 33, 34, 35) These analyses allowed for mixed development, that is a combination of both flats and houses. This was possible only if high blocks of flats were used, thus leaving ground to build houses at a far lower density. The variety of house and flat types included 3-storey terrace housing, 4-storey blocks of double maisonettes, flats of 2, 3 and 4-storeys without lifts and high blocks from 5 to 10-storeys with lifts using modern techniques of construction.<sup>37</sup> No comments concerning architectural treatment were given, the only features of the new development stated were landscaping with blocks of flats in verdure with terraced houses dispersed in regular but not monotonous form<sup>38</sup> (plate 36).

Only one artist's impression, by W. Walcott (plate 37), of the projected 10-storey blocks, was included in the Plan. This shows both brick and rendered blocks of simple flat roofed rectangular slabs, with only balcony and window position creating any formal composition. They are shown laid out in parallel rows with ample spacing between blocks and

planted out. The alternating window to balcony on every other storey on the façade suggests that the blocks contained superimposed maisonettes rather than flats.

The photographs of built schemes included in the County of London Plan were mainly of traditional type local authority work, including examples by private architects such as E. Armstrong and Louis de Soissons. The only 'modern' scheme illustrated was Maxwell Fry's Kensal House. This fact led the reviewer of the County of London Plan in the AR to comment:

The style of the buildings shown in perspective view is not dogmatic, neither in the AR or the MARS sense. There is, except in one case, nothing conspicuously reactionary in public buildings, and there is a fair balance between flats and terraces of small houses, and between contemporary and mildly Georgian looking housing schemes.<sup>39</sup>

Therefore the architectural style of housing was, as with the political content, kept understated. In the section entitled 'Architectural Control' the plan stated:

It is not possible to envisage with any certainty what are likely to be the post-war trends in design. The probability is that the modern movement through which design was passing during the inter-war period will be continued with increased tempo and there will be need for strict control of street architecture, in particular at focal points, road junctions, street crossings and bridgeheads where the maximum architectural effect is desirable. While the control will need to be more firm than in the past, the application of regulations affecting design will need to be consistently liberal in order to meet the changing conditions in technique and thought. Competent and enlightened technical advice will be essential to secure smooth and harmonious working.

and

it is of the utmost importance that architectural control, such as that described above, should be operated through the right medium. In this connection we think that a scheme for a panel of architects and planners working in collaboration with the council's architect might be useful in the early post-war period, and prove of great

advantage to London and its Local Authorities and to the area of architecture it would ensure that this important and often difficult question was dealt with by a group of specialists with a consensus of informed opinion brought to bear on the problems involved.<sup>40</sup>

These two passages present a very clear outline of what Forshaw considered essential for the implementation of the principles of the Plan. However there are some odd ambiguities in the outlining of what aesthetic camp he stood in; 'Strict Control' is discussed in the same sentence as the Modern Movement, but are the two necessarily related or are they quite separate clauses? The next sentence contains a similar duality, 'a more firm control' but at the same time with a more 'Liberal application'. The paragraph can therefore be interpreted either as for or against the Modern Movement. The next paragraph describing the right medium for this architectural control proposes Forshaw as Chief Architect to head a team of informed specialists. The difficulty of the grammar makes an exact interpretation problematic, however it seems probable that the County of London Plan is rather subtly trying to suggest that a Council's Housing Committee is an inappropriate body to decide architectural matters and that a system of architectural control as suggested could be used as much to prevent the dullness typical of most of the LCC's pre-war housing, as it could to prevent the excesses of the Modern Movement. This apparently moderate approach which avoids dogma is the hallmark of the Plan and the quality which made it acceptable to a wide audience. In fact the plan was enthusiastically welcomed by most reviewers in the architectural press without criticism. The AR only hinted at its timidity, but welcomed its self-confessed flexibility, encouraging "those with a bolder and perhaps less realistic outlook [to] go on clarifying their visions that will be all to the good. The authors of the LCC plan appear quite open to further suggestions from outside".<sup>41</sup>



However this moderation is seen to be only apparent if the County of London Plan is compared, not with the LRRC, the RA or the MARS plans<sup>42</sup> but with the Labour Party pamphlet Housing and Planning after the war: The Party's Post-war Policy.<sup>43</sup> It is clear that the two plans share the same fundamental ideologies, and that the County of London Plan is not a 'middle way', but one that was synonymous with left wing politics. The labour Party saw

Britain's task as the physical reconstruction of our land...and then undoubtedly, we shall have the satisfaction of knowing that we are playing our part towards the building of a new Britain which will bring health, comfort, convenience, beauty and happiness, in many cases for the first time into the lives of our people.<sup>44</sup>

Contemporary readers would therefore have made the direct connection between the policies contained in the County of London Plan and left wing politics.

(iii) The Reaction of the Housing and Public Health Committee to the County of London Plan. As Lord Latham, Leader of the LCC, was at pains to point out at the press conference on the County of London Plan at County Hall on 9th July 1943,<sup>45</sup> the full council at their meeting of 11th July were not going either to approve or reject the plan for official policy. Rather, they would only study it and offer it for consideration to other interested authorities; out of about 80 the most important were the Ministry of Town and County Planning and the City Corporation and the Metropolitan Borough Council. At its date of publication and special exhibition at County Hall it was only to form the central text of an open debate concerning all London. "The fruits of all this discussion will be garnered and examined by the council and its committees when the council in the formulation of its planning policy gives further and more detailed consideration to the principles and projects of the Plan itself".<sup>46</sup> This

was not to be until the Council was required by statutory law to prepare a 20 year development plan, published in 1951 as the Development Plan for London.

Despite this lack of statutory enforcement of the plan the Housing and Public Health Committee seriously looked at the implications that the plan had for LCC housing. The first meeting to discuss the plan was on 2nd June 1943<sup>47</sup> where it was resolved that the committee "have no observations to offer at the present stage on the County of London Plan". However a Ministry circular,<sup>48</sup> presented to the chairman of the Housing and Public Health Committee in March 1943 had requested the council draw up a one year plan for post-war housing to be commenced immediately after the war. This task lay before them at the meeting on 21st July 1943<sup>49</sup> and so concentrated their attention onto the implications of Forshaw's Plan. The Committee considered three reports:

Report by Architect (Forshaw).<sup>50</sup> Forshaw reminded the committee of their resolution of 17th February 1943, that housing would follow the London Plan. He listed 34 sites out of 120 already owned by the LCC, in which a conflict existed between the plan and the sites' use for housing. The remaining 86 sites he considered ample for the Council to cope with in one year allowing them to build the same number of flats as in 1938, which was what had been suggested by the Ministry in their circular.

Valuers Report (Westwood).<sup>51</sup> Westwood made quite clear his opinions of the plan: "without attempting in any way to belittle the importance of these matters the most pressing question after the war will be the provision of additional accommodation...". He accepted the suggestion on densities but added

I should point out that the effect of other suggestions for the utilization of land for various purposes such as open spaces, traffic arteries, etc, many render its complete fulfilment impossible [and] the plan represents an ideal which can only be obtained over a very long period of years...and it will be necessary to secure that the plan is not allowed to delay the detailed consideration of schemes for new housing...

The Comptrollers Report (A.R. Wood).<sup>52</sup> The Comptroller analysed the financial implications of the plan concluding that it would "involve a capital outlay of enormous extent...". In fact he calculated the 4,000 acres of open space would cost at 1938 prices about £40 million, which was equivalent to the money the council had spent on housing since 1889. Therefore without extra financial help "it can be stated with virtual certainty that the major features of the plan would be impossible of achievement". He also thought excessive early land purchases would be wasted as the council could not hope to build on it for a very long time. He basically saw the plan as too "advanced" and giving too generous space allowances between blocks.

Forshaw's plan, despite its inbuilt flexibility, was therefore unanimously condemned as idealistic and totally impractical by his fellow officers in the Valuers and Finance Departments. The concept of a planned environment was in practice out of the question in the conditions prevailing in 1943. Westwood especially saw such concerns as another set of peripheral problems which should not divert the ICC from its rôle of supplying desperately needed homes.

The Housing and Public Health Committee resolved at the end of the meeting to ask the Town Planning Committee to consider the sites in conflict and to suggest what "steps could be taken with a view to enabling the housing scheme in question to be proceeded with as far as possible".<sup>53</sup> In other words to justify the discarding of the plan's

proposals.

Further discussions of the sites that conflicted with the plan were deferred until 17th November 1943 when a joint report by the Architect and Valuer was considered.<sup>54</sup> In the report Forshaw again emphasised the small percentage of sites that needed to be reconsidered in light of the recommendations of the County of London Plan. The committee again made no comment. At the next meeting of 1st December 1943 a memo<sup>55</sup> from the Finance Committee, which as well as stressing the need to be informed of the government's intentions on subsidies, stressed that the abandonment of the 'conflict sites' for housing use of c. 67 acres would cost approximately £650,000 in land and wasted money spent on preparing the plans and foundations etc. There seemed to be no area for compromise and the difficult final decision was deferred several times until 27th September 1944<sup>56</sup> when the committee considered yet another report by the Valuer, prepared in February 1944 by Westwood before his death on 13th July 1944.<sup>57</sup> Westwood thought that the plan hampered site development so he used the plans inbuilt flexibility as an excuse to ignore the conflicts. He considered West End Sites were too expensive, therefore not suitable for housing. For density he dismissed any 'hard and fast rules' and the principle of rising density zones. As the need was very great for houses he suggested using the highest densities possible in all areas, that is 50 dwellings to the acre. He thought that 5-storey estates were monotonous and so suggested the use of 4-storey blocks without lifts as he disliked high flats, and to vary heights of blocks was too expensive. Mixed development was therefore not possible in London and so he kept to the pre-war policy of cottages in out-county sites and flats on in-county sites. The suggestion of 4 acres per 1,000 persons open space was not practicable in the first period of

redevelopment and he also disliked the ideas of community groups as it had a "savour of segregation". Westwood's report is therefore openly critical of every aspect of the County of London Plan.

Forshaw in his report on the Valuer's observations<sup>58</sup> again restated the justifications for the plans proposals. He stated that he believed in Town Planning and dismisses the idea that you could buy any cheap site and put housing on it. He is critical of Westwood's logic of using 4-storey blocks, and restated the theory of mixed development using blocks of high flats and cottages. He also stated that it is best to "concentrate on the redevelopment and reconstruction problems within the county boundaries as a first priority",<sup>59</sup> The community concept he claimed was common to all planners in America and Britain, and he thought that the Borough Councils and the Minister of Town and Country Planning would approve of this aspect.

Again the Committee were swayed by the combined conservatism of the Valuer and the Finance Committee and resolved to follow the suggestions of Westwood.<sup>60</sup> In so doing they dropped any attempt at following the proposals of the County of London Plan, that is the concepts of density, mixed development and open space allowance. The wording of this resolution was diplomatically couched in hesitant phrasing: as regards site conflicts, these "may be mitigated in so far as the plan is flexible", and open spaces: "to enable present housing needs to be met it will be necessary to modify the open space proposals..."

Therefore, the progressive Town Planning proposals of Forshaw, with their associated radical political premises, were ideologically incompatible with a system of state subsidised housing for the working classes which was financed and controlled as a marginal tenure group in a

capitalist economy. The ideological make up of most of the senior LCC officials, the Valuer: Westwood, the Clerk to the Council: Salmon, the old and new Chairmen of the Housing and Public Health Committee: Dawson and Gibson, the Comptroller: Wood, were still very much concerned with seeing the supply of working class housing as an obligation local authorities should meet due to private enterprise's inability to profitably supply this type of low cost accommodation. This view, dominant at the council, was not much more than a continuation of an enlightened Victorian benevolence. It was not addressing itself to the more fundamental issues of the causal factors of the social divisions and inequalities in society of the 1930s and 1940s. But this was something that the new influx of left wing professionals into the Architects' Department was challenging. It is for these reasons that the LCC Housing and Public Health Committee, could not in 1944, adapt their production of housing to meet the new concepts and ideology of the County of London Plan. The issues were of course compounded by the fact that this discourse on policy at the LCC pre-empted the parallel ideological changes in Parliament.<sup>61</sup> The discussions of the Housing and Public Health Committee took place in 1943-1944, that is two to six years before the new Labour Government could introduce the new Housing Acts of 1946, 1949 and the Land Acquisitions Act of 1946.

This interpretation, that a confrontation between opposing ideologies was taking place at the LCC, is reinforced by the views expressed by Abercrombie in a letter to The Times<sup>62</sup> concerning the decision of the council to take control of housing away from Forshaw.<sup>63</sup> In it Abercrombie claimed that all the County of London Plan's ideals would be ignored. Instead the Valuer (by then C. Walker) will be

snapping up cheap sites wherever obtainable...and laying them out as separate units...[this would not produce] communities fit for human beings and has blocked road and other improvements... Lord Latham's thin veneer of Housing Director will not deceive anyone who knows the tough, rough core of the Valuers' Department. This is no more a question of professional prestige but a fundamental attitude to social reform.

The new critique of pre-war housing policy, as put forward by Forshaw, had been out-manoeuvred. The two major issues of; (i) the introduction of new experimental techniques and designs in the immediate post-war period and (ii) the implementation of the concepts of the County of London Plan, had been found unsuitable to adopt as general policy and been rejected. Therefore the only area left open where Forshaw could pursue his new ideas was in connection with the Woodberry Down Site.

(iv) The Development of The Woodberry Down Site. The separate report on Woodberry Down by the architect, referred to in the joint report on 'Housing after the War - General Policy and Preparations',<sup>64</sup> was submitted for discussion to the Housing and Public Health Committee on 27th January 1943.<sup>65</sup>

(a) The Meeting of the Housing and Public Health Committee 27th January 1943. Forshaw's revised plans for Woodberry Down. Forshaw's report contained a reworked layout for the Woodberry Down Site, which had been bought in February 1936 and plans had been submitted and approved by the Housing and Public Health Committee on 20th July 1938.<sup>66</sup> This 1938 plan contained 1660 dwellings in buildings of 2 to 5-storeys of the 1934 and 1936 types, including cottages and cottage/flats, and was planned on typical LCC pre-war principles. The blocks were placed on road frontages and formed large geometric layouts with central courtyards. The central feature of the 40 acre site was to have been large horseshoe shaped

blocks (plate 38), along similar lines to the Leeds Quarry Hill estate and also Continental examples like Taut's Hufeisen Britz Siedlung, 1925-27 in Berlin. Despite the inclusion of cottages with tenements, an early attempt at mixed development, the high density of the scheme gave a dull and homogenously dense layout. Forshaw presented a revised plan which overcame this problem by introducing 8-storey blocks, combined with 4-storey tenements and 2-storey cottages to give an overall density of 41 dwellings to the acre. "In this plan straight blocks are sited in parallel running north and south so that all rooms receive the benefit of sunlight...and an open and spacious layout is obtained".<sup>67</sup> The use of high buildings could therefore give the same density but at the same time saving some of the trees on the site so that a "more open character is achieved".<sup>68</sup>

Forshaw was applying the principles of mixed development as put forward in his County of London Plan,<sup>69</sup> on which he was working at this time. The 8-storey blocks were "carefully sited to give variety and interest to the general layout of the estate". Their height meant that they would first have to be passed by the Town Planning Committee as they went over the 40 feet limit and so Forshaw recommended that at first the new plan be approved in principle only. The blocks were also based on old type plans, 1934 and 1936 types, to enable them to be passed rapidly by the Housing and Public Health Committee, but Forshaw stated that he later envisaged improving their accommodation.

The report raised sufficiently problematic issues for the Housing and Public Health Committee to suggest that a special conference should be held to discuss the plans. This was scheduled for 15th March 1943 in the Leader of the Council's room.<sup>70</sup>



(b) The Meeting of the Housing and Public Health Committee 15th March 1943. The Conference on Woodberry Down,<sup>71</sup>

The Conference systematically analysed the new plan and its principles as follows:

Description: Latham first asked Forshaw to describe the new layout. Forshaw stated that he regarded the old horseshoe plan as unsatisfactory and that his new plan provided (1) sunlight as blocks were aligned N/S, (2) no houses on the main Seven Sisters Road and (3) shops set around a precinct and community centre. He agreed in reply to questions from F.C.R. Douglas and the Leader of the Council:

that all the features of the new layout (including the lower overall density) could not be explained solely by reference to the defects of the earlier layout, but that the new scheme represented the practical application of the principles of the new London Plan. Although the density on the new layout was lower than that on the pre-war layout it gave roughly 148 ppa. as against 136 ppa. gross proposed in the London Plan.

Use of falling land in North West Corner. Three acres in the N.W. corner were not utilized for housing by Forshaw due to poor drainage and were reserved for Industry. However: "the Leader and other members emphasised the importance in laying out any estates for post-war housing of securing the maximum possible use of the site compatible with good planning since the need would be great and sites not readily available". The Committee therefore agreed to get Forshaw to revise the plan in this respect.

Interference with Modern Houses in Woodberry Grove. Forshaw's plan had assumed the purchase and demolition of Woodberry Grove houses and so had placed 8-storey blocks near to these houses. The committee thought this "would have a deteriorating effect on the houses", and asked Forshaw to replan this area.

Siting of Shops. The "Valuer pressed strongly for the removal of the shops to a site at the northern end of Lordship Road at its junction with Seven Sister Road, as being the only place in which the shops were likely to be a commercial success". The "Architect agreed that the present position might be improved by transferring the community centre to the west site of Lordship Road and make shops nearer to that road". It was agreed to put the community centre on the west side and the shops on the east side of Lordship Road.

Location of Public House. "The Valuer urged that a well conducted public house of the type suitable to a working class population was a necessary amenity and should be centrally placed". The siting was left to a later date.

Fixation of Rents. "Mr. Silkin suggested that, on a site of special attractiveness such as this in which efforts were being made to secure a particularly pleasing development the council might reasonably expect to obtain higher rents than those normally charged for the council's dwellings." It was agreed that, having regard to the fact that the council would be building for a wider public after the war than formerly, the Valuer should consider whether the rents for the dwellings on this estate should be higher than ordinarily fixed.

Introduction of 8-storey flats with lifts. The Committee considered the suitability, for working class tenants with families, of the use of high flats. Amazingly, this discussion which was to have such a dramatic impact on post-war housing, mainly centred around whether children could reach the buttons in unattended lifts. If not, it was argued they would have to use the stairs and so high flats would be expected to be unpopular with families. As only one pre-war block at Tabard Garden estate had been provided with a lift the Committee decided to contact the

Valuer (an acquaintance of the LCC's Valuer) at Leeds to send them a report on the success of the use of lifts at the Quarry Hill Estate.

Cost of Development. The Comptroller pointed out that the average cost per dwelling was £1,000 (ie the average for cottages and blocks), compared to £800 if the site was developed only in 5-storey block dwellings. The 5 acre strip left undeveloped along by the river only counted for an excess of c. £30. It was therefore agreed "that any layout involving so high a cost, even if ultimately approved for this particular estate, must be regarded as highly exceptional; and that for post-war housing generally it was essential to secure Government approval that a much lower average cost should be secured".

This analysis by the Housing and Public Health Committee of Forshaw's revised Woodberry Down site gave a revealing insight into their attitudes to state housing. The concern throughout, especially by Latham, was on obtaining the maximum number of dwellings. This desire obviously conflicted with Forshaw's attempt at establishing on this large virgin site of nearly 45 acres a complete 'neighbourhood unit' with a community centre, shops, industry, schools and housing in flats and cottages. The allotted area for industry was therefore immediately removed from the plan. The other priority was cost. It was seen that the plan's principles of lower density and mixed development were increasing the cost, as estimated on 1938 prices by about 25% per dwelling.

The combination of these factors led the Committee to view the proposed layout as 'exceptional', and of a far higher standard than pre-war examples. Two options for the Housing and Public Health Committee followed from this, either (1) to trim off all the innovatory

qualities of the plan (ie 8-storey flats, use of lifts, lower densities, open planted areas, and as happened with the 1927 Ossulton Street Scheme) and so effectively reduce it to pre-war standards or (2) to consider it as exceptional and therefore suitable for higher rents and so only open to skilled workers, etc., who could afford to pay a higher rent.

With the post-war subsidy structure and level still undecided the Housing and Public Health Committee were at this stage unaware of what type of schemes (ie overcrowding, slum clearance or general provision of housing) would be eligible for subsidies, and what the value of the subsidies would be. They were also unable accurately to predict post-war labour and material costs. It was therefore expedient for them to investigate both the above options.

(c) The Meeting of the Housing and Public Health Committee 6th October 1943.

The reports of the Architect, Valuer and Comptroller. The Conference was followed up by reports by Forshaw (with a revised layout plan following the Conference's suggestions), the Valuer and the Comptroller which were submitted and discussed at the meeting of the Housing and Public Health Committee on 6th October 1943.<sup>72</sup> The same difference in ideological commitment of the three officers was evident in their response to the new revised plan as those already discussed in connection with the County of London Plan.<sup>73</sup> Forshaw's continuing polemic against the conservatism of the Housing and Public Health Committee concentrated on the issue of density: "the proposal to develop this site at a density even greater than the pre-war proposal is one which I could not consider to be satisfactory in this location. This is a matter to which the Committee will doubtless wish to give serious consideration".

The Valuer's report gave the same arguments against the proposals that he had used against the County of London Plan. He disliked high flats for working class accommodation and thought lifts were unnecessarily expensive, and so proposed that the site should be developed throughout in 4-storey blocks of maisonettes.

The Comptroller's case against the layout was made by explicitly highlighting the extra costs involved: "Thus the price to be paid to relieve architectural monotony by the inclusion of multi-storey blocks and cottages and for the provision of lifts is about £3.10s. per dwelling or £6,500 for the whole estate annually for 40 years".

The issues of planning and architectural quality were again considered by Forshaw's fellow officers as of only marginal concern to the LCC. The inference was that the cost of c. £6,500 a year for 40 years was certainly not money well spent, in that it did not provide more but less accommodation. The interest and involvement of Latham, the Leader of the Council, showed the importance of this debate in the post-war development of LCC housing policy.

At this meeting Forshaw was asked to submit further details on the 8-storey blocks, which were submitted and discussed at the meeting on 26th July 1944.

(d) The Meeting of the Housing and Public Health Committee 26th July 1944.<sup>74</sup>

Forshaw's Report. The Committee had asked Forshaw to outline the cost differences between balcony access and staircase access in the development of the 8-storey blocks. The use of a staircase access was thought more suitable by the Committee, especially for the higher floors. However the adoption of this type reduced still further the number of

flats from 384 to 308, and at the same time increased the cost per room from £243 to £263. The effect of this on the cost of the whole estate was; total cost £1,222,000 to £1,191,000 and average cost per room £204 to £206, and number of dwellings 1866 to 1790. The number of shops was increased from 12 to 20, without altering the plan.

Forshaw also wanted to increase the standard of accommodation to that submitted as evidence to the Central Advisory Sub Committee: "The standards given in that evidence have not been adopted by the council as its post-war housing policy, but it seemed reasonable that in planning for after the war I should have regard to the opinions which the Committee and the Council expressed in that connection". Forshaw highlighted the estimated increase in cost based on 1938 prices that this would incur. The 1934 'Type 3' 5-storey balcony access was £175 per room, the 1936 Type 5-storey staircase access was £212 per room, and the proposed 8-storey type was £263 per room. The 8-storey flat therefore cost £88 more than the 1934 Type 3 flat.

The Valuer's comments on Forshaw's report. The Valuer restricted his comments to suggesting that it would be possible to charge higher rents for the 8-storey blocks.

The Comptroller's comments on Forshaw's report. The Comptroller thought Forshaw was misusing the evidence to the Central Advisory Housing Committee - Sub Committee since this did not refer to cost problems. He refrained from further comment because post-war subsidies and prices were still unknown.

The report by Forshaw is especially interesting in the estimated breakdown of costs. The new 8-storey blocks were therefore from the

outset anticipated to be about 50% more expensive than the 1934 types, which were to be the types used for all other immediate post-war buildings, and 24% more expensive even than the new 1936 types. The greater expense over the 1936 new types, which basically had identical accommodation but with a higher internal standard of finish, must be entirely taken up by the extra cost of the new construction and the provision of lifts. These estimates must also have been seen to be very provisional as the LCC had no experience in the new construction techniques. The items of lifts (at £20) and new construction techniques (at up to £44.10.0), which were necessitated by building over 5-storeys therefore increased the costs by 24-50% without adding to the standard of the accommodation.

This breakdown of costs is therefore the key to understanding the responses of the Leader of the Council, the Valuer, the Comptroller and the Housing and Public Health Committee to Forshaw's proposals, and to their reluctance to commit themselves to new planning concepts, as such changes were not economic solutions under the pre-war subsidy structure. It is also important to stress that the changes Forshaw was attempting to implement were not so much of content but of design and planning aspects. That is, it was an attempt by Forshaw to have the Housing and Public Health Committee accept that the architectural quality was as important a part of the total concept of 'Housing' as the more tangible aspects of internal accommodation and amenities.

The proposed revised layout plan for Woodberry Down only underwent some further minor modifications<sup>75</sup> after a conference between the chairmen of the Education, Social Welfare and Hospital Committees on 27th March 1945. This resulted in an amended plan with an enlarged school

site, a site for a medical centre, and a synagogue. The number of shops was reduced from 20 to 14. A site for a public house, an Estate office, a doctor's surgery, a house for a midwife and 10 1-room dwellings were also included, making the final total number of dwellings 1,764.

The final layout for Woodberry Down was approved by the Housing and Public Health Committee on 24th October 1945,<sup>76</sup> just over a month before Forshaw's resignation. Thus work started after Forshaw had resigned, the site opening in August 1946, with building work continuing into the early 1950s (most were finished by 1954 but the shops not until 1957), and so he was not actually responsible for supervising the work himself. This was taken over by Walker, the new Director of Housing and Valuer and the Housing Architect, S. Howard. However, as the plans and some of the detailed drawings for the blocks were underway before Forshaw's departure, the scheme will be analysed as representing his ideas from his period of office as Architect to the Council.

(V) Analysis of the Woodberry Down Estate. Woodberry Down Estate, the largest site planned under Forshaw's direct control in his research group, allows an analysis of how he managed to translate some of the theory of the County of London Plan into practice. This analysis will consider features under the three headings of Planning, Construction, and Design and aesthetic effect.

(a) Planning.

Site Layout. The final site layout (plate 39) despite its amendments and adjustments as described above during its approval by the Housing and Public Health Committee still exhibited several innovative features. The most striking is the orientation of the blocks in a rigorous N/S axis, throughout the whole site. The site of some 45 acres was bounded on two



sides by the long arms of the New River, which join at the N.E. corner and, on the third side by Green Lanes, forming a triangular plot. Within this boundary the site was further subdivided into five separate areas by the existing road network. Seven Sisters Road running nearly W/E cuts the site into approximate halves, creating three areas in the southern half and two areas in the northern section. The southern section is subdivided by Lordship Road which runs N/S (this was widened by the Borough Council to form a short boulevard) and Woodberry Down Road which runs W/E, thus creating two large and one small areas. The northern section is divided by the L-shaped Woodberry Grove, the larger arm running parallel to Seven Sisters Road and thus subdividing the area into two.

The fact that the road network is orientated approximately in W/E (Seven Sisters, Woodberry Grove and Woodberry Down Road) and N/S (Lordship Road and Green Lanes) axes (about  $20^{\circ}$  off true axis) facilitated the adoption of a site layout using N/S orientated blocks. This type of planning, whose 'raison d'être' is to allow the maximum amount of sunlight to each block throughout the day, became a necessity due to the use of tall 8-storey slab blocks. The orientation of the blocks in N/S axes, provided they were spaced proportionately further apart the higher they were, meant that in the morning the east façades were illuminated and in the afternoon the west, thus giving a more even distribution of light to all the rooms in the block.

The discussion on orientation of tall blocks was one that Forshaw would have been aware of from the ongoing debate within the European Modern Movement on the problems of urban design.<sup>77</sup> It became known as the 'Zielenbau' layout and contrasted with the earlier practice of

joining blocks into a continuous perimeter wall enclosing gardens and courtyards, as in the huge Vienn<sup>n</sup>ese schemes like the Karl Marx Hof, and in Berlin Siedlungen, eg Tauts Hufeisen Britz Siedlung 1925-7. These schemes had also influenced British planners, most notably the Leeds Quarry Hill estate by Livett,<sup>78</sup> and the Ossulton Street scheme<sup>79</sup> by Topham Forest 1928-37. The 1938 scheme for Woodberry Down had been planned in this way with the large horseshoe shaped blocks. It was this layout technique that Forshaw had advocated in 1942 in his evidence to the Central Advisory Housing Committee - Sub Committee on design of dwellings.

However, in the Zielenbau layout to avoid monotony blocks were not joined together to create immensely long continuous slabs, but either separated into smaller units running on the same axis or joined to form a larger slab but with sections set back or projected to enliven the long plane of the building. At Woodberry Down Forshaw used both techniques. The two northern site sections and the smaller southern section were not deep enough to continue unduly the N/S blocks, and in the larger southern areas only the eastern section is planned with two separate blocks set in the same axis. The 8-storey blocks are conceived in a much larger scale and the long continuous slab was broken up by articulating the end sections (as shown in the plan for the 8-storey blocks, plate 40).

To organise efficient access to these blocks they were further arranged into a 'Double Row' format. That is, in the case of the 5-storey blocks the access side of one block was orientated to face the access side of an adjoining block. The two blocks placed as mirror images of each other therefore shared a common internal central access area, and small access roads turned off the main roads into these

tarmacked courtyards onto which the balcony access side fronted. In the 1934 types the kitchen, bathroom, toilet and one bedroom faced this area. The outer façades of the paired blocks were divided from other paired blocks by a planted garden area. The sun balcony and living room and the other bedrooms of the 1934 type over<sup>^</sup>looked this more pleasant aspect.

In the case of the paired 8-storey blocks the main pedestrian entrances were placed on the outer façades and the motorised access to the refuse chutes on the inner courtyard area. However due to the larger central area between these tall blocks there was sufficient area in the central courtyard for further planting and garden areas.

This double row format of N/S blocks therefore created open ended courtyards. This presented problems when the open block was fronted onto the main Seven Sisters Road. Although relatively well planted with mature trees, especially on the southern side, the blocks on the northern side were particularly vulnerable to noise. They were therefore continued at the road end to form reversed L shaped blocks. The addition of this shorter W/E section effectively created a nearly continuous screen to the Seven Sisters Road (plate 41).

The site layout as regards orientation of blocks and distribution of access and courtyards was in line with the most recent developments in Europe. Woodberry Down therefore stands as a landmark in LCC housing as the first estate built using a thorough going application of the most advanced concepts of urban planning developed in Europe.

Internal Accommodation. The 5-storey blocks were of the 1934 types I and IV balcony access. (plates 42 and 43) These were updated to include lifts and provide kitchen facilities, bedroom cupboards and gas

coppers. The 3-storey maisonette with flat over (plate 44) and the 2-storey cottages were types developed in the 1930s for use on out-county estates. The main innovations were therefore in the new designs for the 8-storey blocks which had staircase access, and were similar to Wheeler's 1936 new types already analysed. The long blocks, 337 feet long, were subdivided in 5, comprising three different units A,B and C (plate 40). The central block was a unit C, the next two were unit Bs and the end blocks unit A. Each unit had a staircase and lift, and unit B was slightly larger in that it extended into unit A to provide one extra bedroom. The three different units provided variety in size of flats, ranging from 2- to 5-room flats. Most flats had a private sun balcony and a drying balcony.

Mixed Development. The scheme was intended to offer a variety of building types but with the reduction of the number of 8-storey blocks to four, in the final layout the 5-storey blocks tended to dominate the site (four 8-storey blocks compared to forty-three 5-storey blocks). Pressure on Forshaw to keep the development at a pre-war density level allowed little scope for a true mixed development. The scheme as built consisted of 1655 flats in 5-and 8-storey blocks, and 109 dwellings in 2-or 3-storey cottages; that is 94% flats. The County of London Plan had proposed that in densities of up to about 160 ppa. 25% houses to 75% flats could be achieved, and at densities of 200 ppa. 100% flats. The density proposed by the Housing and Public Health Committee on Woodberry Down Site was 39.7 dwellings per acre, equivalent to 178 ppa. which therefore falls between the two County of London Plan figures, showing that at 94% flats and 6% cottages the Woodberry Down layout does conform to County of London Plan principles. It was the insistence of the Housing and Public Health Committee on having a density nearly reaching

the maximum suggested in the plan for inner London areas of 200 ppa, on a site which was scheduled in the plan for only 136 ppa, which caused the apparent lack of 'mix' in the development. In fact the small south west corner is the only part planned for 3-and 2-storey development. The 3-storey maisonette/flat blocks faced the new access roads and the cottages were placed around a short green cul-de-sac in terraces (plate 45). The idea of terraced housing in ordered rows around greens and cul-de-sacs contrasted to high blocks in verdure was recommended in the County of London Plan.<sup>80</sup> The principles of Mixed Development were therefore only partially realised at Woodberry Down.

Community Planning. The size of the site at some 45 acres presented an opportunity of planning a complete neighbourhood unit. Forshaw's first layout included an industrial area on the north west corner, which if retained would have added to the site's credibility as a neighbourhood unit. The final layout did still retain sites for shops, a public house, a junior school, a senior school, a community centre, a library, a medical centre, a synagogue, tenants' gardens and open spaces along the river sides - an unprecedented number of amenities compared to pre-war estates of a similar size, eg White City.

However the overall grouping and planning of these sites was hampered by the pre-existing road network which restricted Forshaw in applying County of London Plan principles. The neighbourhood should ideally have been surrounded by open spaces with the main through roads by-passing the community by running through the peripheral open spaces in wide green parkways, the local roads then leading off into the centre of the neighbourhood, with residential roads leading in turn off these. In the centre of the neighbourhood the community facilities were sited, a

plan which enabled access to the communal amenities without having to cross main routeways.

Instead, the opposite occurs at Woodberry Down. The main road slices right through the centre of the neighbourhood unit, and the peripheral green spaces left isolating the site from the river rather than the major traffic routeways. This forced the community buildings into the corners of the site. The inhabitants of the northern section thus had to cross the main road in order to get access to all the facilities except the junior school. One feature of the County of London Plan that could be put into practice was the placing of shops on a secondary slip road along the (planned) tree lined boulevard of Lordship Road, creating a small concave shopping precinct (plate 46).

In terms of an ideal neighbourhood unit Woodberry Down must therefore be seen as a very imperfect example which primarily results from the enforced use of a road network built for entirely different purposes.

(b) Construction. The development of an 8-storey block forced the LCC Housing and Public Health Committee to investigate non-traditional means of construction. The 8-storey blocks were initially intended to be an experiment in steel framed structures,<sup>81</sup> like Levita House proposed in 1927 as the central feature of the Ossulton Street estate. However the problems of availability of materials, especially steel which was in very short supply after the war, meant that alternative construction methods had to be investigated. At the Housing and Public Health Committee meeting of 24th January 1945 it was resolved to instruct Forshaw to look into monolithic concrete construction for 5-storey blocks which he considered would be quicker to build than traditional loadbearing brick

construction.<sup>82</sup> The example of pre-war building of working class flats in concrete was a modest scheme, Evelyn Court, Amhurst Road, Hackney, built by the Four Percent Industrial Dwellings Company Ltd and designed by Sir John Burnet, Tait and Lorne in 1935. It was based on a system of concrete cells formed by the floors and cross wall, which formed the structural support, the outer walls were merely infill. The block was conceived as a simple rectangular slab with a flat roof and projecting stair wells and entrance lobbies, of the staircase access accommodation, which subdivided the main façade. Decoration and applied ornament were avoided. The façades had a plain surface with flush fitting metal windows. The architectural articulation of the formal elements were kept to a minimum, creating a simple and clearly articulated 'Modern' façade.

Forshaw outlined the main advantages of this new type of construction as (i) time: it was estimated to take only 18 weeks compared to 40 weeks of a traditional construction. (ii) It did not require skilled labour and (iii) it was fire resistant. Also, if it were used for six or more blocks it would be both quicker and also probably cost no more than traditional constructional methods. These qualities of speed and the use of unskilled labour were both critical factors in the LCC's post-war housing programme and so the Housing and Public Health Committee agreed to experiment with the system at a new site. The Minerva Street Site was chosen.<sup>83</sup>

Minerva Street Site. This site had been planned and approved by the Housing and Public Health Committee on 1st August 1939 with seven 4-and 5-storey blocks of the 1934 types I and III, and a special 2-storey block of one room flats for old and single people. The County of London Plan suggested this site should be used for a parkway but the Town Planning

Committee decided on 25th October 1945 to widen Old Bethnal Green Road and allow housing. A revised layout<sup>84</sup> was developed using eight 4-storey blocks with a 3-storey portion next to Old Bethnal Green Road. The old peoples one room flats were mixed in with the other size flats in the blocks following recommendations of the 1944 Housing Manual (Plate 47).

The same contractors, as used in 1935 by the Four Percent Industrial Dwellings Company Ltd, Messrs Holland, Hannen and Cubitt Ltd., were contacted and asked to submit an estimate, which was accepted by the Housing and Public Health Committee on 24th October 1945.<sup>85</sup> The quote of £291,669 was 90% higher than the equivalent cost of traditional buildings at 1938 prices. The scheme was recommended to proceed as it was stated that the Borough Councils had received quotes ranging from 60-100% higher than 1938 prices.

The method of construction of the 4-storey blocks at Minerva Street was a monolithic concrete construction and consisted of reinforced load bearing cross walls forming a cellular structure.<sup>86</sup> The method of cellular structure was not a rigid system and a variety of flat sizes was possible within each floor plan.

The emphasis upon speed and efficiency, the main bonus predicted in using this method, was clearly shown to the site workers by displaying a large progress chart on the side of the site hut<sup>87</sup> (plate 48). Slogans on the board stated "Although some of the time lost up to date has been due to shortage of labour and materials a determined effort by all will enable the lost ground to be regained". Underneath was chalked in "progress disappointing, lets have concentrated effort to retrieve this loss". Despite the use of such tactics by the contractors the fourteen month target, (important to show the Housing and Public Health Committee



the speediness of the construction method so that further contracts would be offered to them), was not met. The estate was commenced in January 1946 and completed in April 1948, taking twenty-six months not fourteen.

The construction techniques used imposed very few restraints upon the architects. However the resulting appearance was neatly summed up in The Architect and Building News, review of Minerva Street Estate as: "neither traditional nor modern, but just LCC, with a pitched roof as a sort of a signature tune"<sup>88</sup> (plate 49). Indeed the aesthetic possibilities of the cellular cross wall structure were not taken advantage of at all. The external walls were not loadbearing yet they were treated as such, creating very heavy and ponderous façades. The façades were only enlivened by creating V shaped channels in the outer concrete surface at the junctions of formwork of each lift, ie floor, cill and head. These 3 horizontal lines are the only formal device used except the projecting bay and combined balcony on the non-access side façade which provided a balcony for only two flats per floor (plate 50). Even compared to Burnet, Tait and Lorne's Evelyn Court estate, the Minerva Street blocks are very unimpressive and show little understanding of the materials used. The only modern detail, other than the use of concrete, were the metal windows, the provision of roof playgrounds for children on top of the 3rd floor at the Old Bethnal Green Road end with the attached 'sun playroom for children' which had a flat roof.

The architect in charge of this scheme, S. Howard,<sup>89</sup> had therefore made no attempt to take advantage of the new medium, instead treating the façades as if they were built using traditional brick construction. The lack of experimentation, the avoidance of any reference to Modern architectural ideas are especially apparent when the blocks are compared

to contemporary schemes by Tecton which used a similar cross wall cellular structure, such as the Priory Green (Busaco Street) Estate 1937-51, and the Spa Green Estate (Rosebery Avenue) 1938-46. The 4/5 storey block on the Spa Green Estate (plate 51) is directly comparable to the Minerva Street blocks. <sup>It</sup> has pilotis at the south end raising the rectangular slab off the ground, an S-shaped ground plan, a formal articulation of the west façade with private balconies slightly projecting (and faced in cream tiles with a rust coloured metal tube hand and side rails) <sup>and</sup> alternating with brick clad infill walls, <sup>It</sup> shows Tecton analysing and utilizing the structural opportunities offered by the cross wall structure which totally frees the main façade from a load bearing function. The Tecton block has considerable 'architectural content' whereas the Minerva blocks do not.

The Architect and Building News was the only journal<sup>90</sup> which attempted in its review of the Minerva Estate any critical appraisal of the scheme. After discussing the bareness of the site and its layout plan pattern which gave too restricted a use of open grassed space (a point similarly made in Building Digest<sup>91</sup> where the reviewer compared Minerva Street Estate to the Berlin Siemensstadt and advised the planting of silver birches), the reviewer gave a more general criticism of the LCCs post-war work. However this followed the point that to the new tenants the blocks seemed "like heaven" compared to the slum dwellings from which they came. But the reviewer suggested that such relativism must not make the LCC complacent and stated:

If these remarks are considered too critical in view of the urgency of rehousing poor families, to whom they are a tremendous advance in every way, our answer is that when large areas of London are built up a new environment will be created which may, if imagination is not used, form a depressing, dirty looking world which may not breed as good a citizen as was hoped for, and that now is the time to examine

the matter. The late Sir Charles Reilly's criticisms were the subject of a retort by the Chairman of the LCC Housing Committee, but however irritating criticism may be to those who are grappling with tough problems and tight costs, its purpose is to anticipate the even more severe strictures of future generations.

This is an interesting critique, employing the words "environment", "imagination" and "depressing", and also the concept of architectural determinism (alluded to in that such estates may not breed desirable citizens for the future).<sup>It</sup> shows that despite its lack of any erudite architectural criticism the reviewer was judging the LCC's work on aesthetic grounds. That is, that subsidised state housing in the post-war society should be considered in terms of its environmental qualities rather than just as the provision of numbers of dwellings. The review therefore highlights the shift in ideological values concerning housing which could now be seen even in non-progressive journals, like the Architect and Building News.

A second scheme, the Flower House Estate, Lewisham,<sup>92</sup> was built in 1948-50, utilizing the same construction technique but erected by another contractor. It followed similar planning principles to the Minerva Street estate. It also presented an 'unimaginative' and 'depressing' environment and differed very little from the Minerva Street scheme (plate 52).

The results of these experiments in concrete construction, which had not shown the anticipated advantages of speed, were used to develop the LCC's first 8-storey blocks. High-rise 8-storey blocks with lifts had been discussed and planned but never built in the inter-war years.<sup>93</sup> Topham Forrest had proposed 8-storey blocks at China Walk and also at Ossulton Street. These had never been realised, the 8-storey central portion of Levita House at Ossulton Street was reduced to a 6-storey

block without lifts in the built scheme. The construction method proposed had been a brick clad steel frame system and not monolithic concrete. The use of 8-storey blocks was recommended at Ossulton Street due to the particular problems of the small site and its original cost, and was strongly influenced by the Viennese estates of the late 1920s. It was to have been a continuous perimeter block geometrically subdividing the plot. The Ossulton Street proposals were therefore of little significance both in construction and in planning to the ideas developed at Woodberry Down.

(vi) The 8-storey blocks at Woodberry Down:

(a) Structure. The monolithic cross wall cellular structure used at Minerva and Flower House estates gave the LCC its first experience in the use of concrete. The Housing Architect's main interests had been to utilize this new technique to maximise output rather than aesthetics. However the decision of the Housing and Public Health Committee to experiment with 8-storey blocks for Woodberry Down and Stepney/Poplar reconstruction area posed greater problems. In transforming the layout plans of the 8-storey block, originally planned using a steel frame, to one of concrete construction, the LCC architects had to make use of a different technique from that of the cross wall cellular structure. This was in part due to the restraints imposed on the design by the prepared floor plans that assumed the use of the more flexible steel frame technique and also the use of staircase access which meant that the rigid use of a cellular system was not so easy to achieve, with the change of internal format from flats arranged around a staircase well rather than using a cantilevered access balcony. Instead, in collaboration with the same contractors Messrs Holland and Hannen and Cubitt Ltd, a system which

used the external walls and internal piers and beams to form the loadbearing structure was developed. In the floor plan of Unit B (plate 40) it can be seen how the external wall forms a continual outer band of support punctuated only by the relatively small windows, which is continued internally by the side cross walls of the staircase and lift shaft which are nearly continuous from the front to the back of the block, and by the piers evenly spaced along the central corridor of the flats.

A similar building method was used to that at Minerva Street, the internal walls used wood wool slates as permanent shuttering and the concreting of each floor took <sup>three</sup> lifts; the first lift from floor to cill, the second from the cill to the next floor and the third formed the floor slab itself. The main difference between Minerva Street and Woodberry Down is in the use of two different loadbearing structures. The cellular structure imposes weight bearing solid transverse end walls but gives a free non loadbearing longitudinal façade, whereas the external loadbearing wall gives a freer internal division but restricts the area of apertures in the external façades.

In the development of these new concrete structures the role of the structural engineer must be emphasised. The LCC relied upon the structural engineer of Holland, Hannen and Cubitt for advice and to some extent the lack of innovation at Minerva and Woodberry Down may be considered to depend upon this link. Tecton however had the services of Ove Arup,<sup>94</sup> a quite exceptional structural engineer who had had by the early 1930s nearly <sup>ten</sup> years experience in reinforced concrete design and construction. Arup defined his rôle with Tecton as a participant who made their aesthetic design decisions possible. That is, as a backup

secondary rôle rather than as a generator of a structural system which could then be left to the architects to add elements to, as was the case of the relationship between the LCC architects and the engineers of Holland, Hannen and Cubitt:

I don't think much of those who say that I should decide on an appropriate structure for the job and they will fit their architecture to it, and I have met a few of those, especially in the early days of functionalism, when the functionally 'right' thing was supposed to produce the right<sup>95</sup> architecture. It doesn't, it produces no architecture at all.

This last sentence could aptly be used to describe the concrete blocks at Minerva Street and Woodberry Down.

He continued: "the engineer, bent on creating logical, elegant and buildable structure, must realise that there are other more important aims which may take precedence, even at the cost of a distorted and more expensive structure".<sup>96</sup> This call for the primacy of 'architectural' decisions over engineering logic is very evident in the Tecton buildings analysed above, and was an idea that was not conceivable at the LCC Architects' Department in the 1940s. Decisions concerning design were firmly controlled by the Housing and Public Health Committee who had a strong bias towards minimum cost and hence ease of construction, leaving the architectural staff to make nothing more than applied patterns on the façades. This was therefore the exact reverse of the Tecton/Arup relationship, and gave primacy to engineering considerations and not architectural ones.

(b) Amenities: The development of the Woodberry Down site as an "exceptional" and "particularly pleasing development"<sup>97</sup> encouraged the Council to experiment with new standards of amenities. The main advances, other than improving the standards of the fittings to keep in

line with the recommendations of the Ministry of Health's 1944 Housing Manual, (especially in improving the kitchen and provision of cupboards in the bedrooms) were the provision of lifts in 5-and 8-storey blocks and of a central heating and water system in the 8-storey blocks.

Lifts: The discussion of the use of lifts in blocks of flats started in the 1920s when tenements of 5, or sometimes 6-storeys, were starting to become the norm for inner London developments. The Council's first experiment with an electric passenger lift was at the Tabard Street Estate, approved in 1920 and installed in 1922.<sup>98</sup> This experiment was prompted by the Ministry of Health's Manual Unfit Houses and Unhealthy Areas, 1919, which suggested in higher tenements alternatives to staircase access should be explored. However the Government's subsidy structures in the inter-war period did not change to make such expensive lift installations, which also required regular maintenance, a viable proposition for working class housing. The 1944 Ministry of Health's Housing Manual again stated the need for the provision of lifts in blocks of five or more storeys and in blocks of 8-storeys the LCC had no choice but to provide them.

The layout of the 8-storey blocks with staircase access in a slab block of only 1 flat deep, meant that each stairwell and lift only serviced 2 or 3 flats per floor. This meant that over 8-storeys 1 lift serviced between 16 to 24 flats, a very uneconomic distribution of flats to lift.

Central Heating Systems: As with the provision of lifts, the use of other fuels and systems for heating and hot water supply, as alternatives to the solid fuel ranges and back boilers, had been discussed before the war. As an experiment Ossulton Street had been built with a district

heating plant providing constant hot water. Also installed were electric cookers, lighting and power points (no gas was supplied because rival Gas and Electric Companies would not install their systems free of charge unless it was the only fuel source installed) as well as grates or open fires which the Ministry insisted were fitted to all working class housing since coal was the cheapest fuel for heating.

With the 8-storey blocks of Woodberry Down the problems of designing flues for 8-storeys, and the problems of getting coal to the higher floor and the disposal of ashes, made the installation of a central heating system an attractive proposition. The 1944 Housing Manual also suggested the use of central heating systems and so the Housing and Public Health Committee resolved<sup>99</sup> to look into the cost of a central heating system on an estate. This was originally to be at Flower House Estate but was instead tried out at Woodberry Down.

The provision of central heating and hot water supply increased the rents considerably. For a 5-room flat the total inclusive rent was 47s. 6d per week in 1948,<sup>100</sup> of which nearly 14s. was for heating, that is just over a quarter of the rent. The very high total rents, ranging from 28s. 6d for a 2-room flat to 47s. 6d for a 5-room flat, meant that these blocks were not intended for the average LCC tenant, but for one capable of affording the heavy premium imposed by the extra facilities.

(c) Design - Aesthetic Effect:

The detailed design of the 8-storey blocks and the building supervision of the estate were executed under the direction of Walker, the Director of Housing and Valuer, but based on the layout and type plans prepared under Forshaw before his resignation.<sup>101</sup> The new Housing



Architect, S. Howard<sup>102</sup> was directly in charge of the work and without a more detailed account<sup>103</sup> the design of the Woodberry Down 8-storey blocks must be assumed to be his. It is impossible to say whether the final designs would have been of a different character if Forshaw had still been Chief Architect to the Council. However in this rôle Forshaw would not have designed any buildings himself, but only criticized or approved designs made in his department. The architectural staff were the same under Walker and Howard as those under Forshaw, and it is therefore likely that the blocks would not have been markedly different. The design work must also have been in a preliminary stage whilst Forshaw was still in charge,<sup>because</sup> in May 1946 a model of one of the blocks was exhibited at RIBA's 'Building Now' Exhibition.<sup>104</sup>

Details of the Architects' Department were discussed in Section 1.3, but before analysing the designs it is important to stress the particular qualities of the Architects' Department. The hierarchical structure of the department gave control of design to the senior members of staff. Many of these architects had been working at the LCC since just after the First World War, and so had been trained in the first quarter of the 20th century. This, coupled with the fact that few younger men had been recruited into the department since the war, meant that the Architects' Department was strongly biased towards men with a training and architectural experience built up in the 1920s and 1930s. Their architectural and aesthetic ideas were therefore formed in the context of the very conservative and insular atmosphere of architectural practice of the inter-war years. An idea of this conservatism is seen in the views of G. Jenkins, President of the Architectural Association, who at his annual address in 1927 referred to Le Corbusier's Weissenhof Siedlung houses: "A French exponent of Modernism has built a plate glass box to

form one of those new abodes - one could not conceive it as a house for anyone save a vegetarian bacteriologist".<sup>105</sup> Also sir R. Blomfield

saw new architecture as "essentially continental in its origin and inspiration...it claims as a merit that it is cosmopolitan. As an Englishman and proud of his country, I detest and despise cosmopolitanism".<sup>106</sup> Even the more progressive establishments, like the Architectural Association, were hostile to certain of the ideas of the European Modern Movement. British architecture in the 1920s and 30s was not of a radical nature and by 1939, the few 'modern' buildings that had been built were associated with a small and young group of architects, far removed from the architects at the LCC.

The 5-storey blocks, the cottages, and the 3-storey maisonette/flat blocks are based on pre-war designs and do not exhibit any advances in terms of design or aesthetic effect. The analysis of aesthetic effect will therefore concentrate on the designs for the 8-storey blocks.

The image of tall long blocks of flats set in verdure is one contained in the County of London Plan (see plate 37), as well as in the 1943 edition of Abercrombie's Town and Country Planning: "The simple lofty white, flat roofed buildings with an occasional break are impressive and where the grace of a terminal feature is introduced can be beautiful".<sup>107</sup> Forshaw's work at the Miners' Welfare Committee also alluded to an interest in some of the European Modern Movements ideas (especially the work of Dudok). Thus the new planning principles of both Forshaw and Abercrombie assumed certain architectural treatments for the blocks of flats.

Forshaw's type plans for the 8-storey blocks were composed of 3 separate units, each with central stair and lift wells, and when combined

produce long slab blocks of 1 flat deep. The articulation of the two end units broke up the continuous frontality of the slab. The possible treatment for an 8-storey slab of this format was therefore very wide ranging. However, under S. Howard the LCC architects failed to exploit the flexibility provided by using a monolithic concrete structure and no radical reappraisal of the form of the block was made; the resulting design of the Woodberry Down blocks appear like an overgrown traditional 5-storey block. The architectural content of the blocks are a very complex amalgam of several disparate sources and styles. This muddled quality, "neither traditional nor modern but just LCC",<sup>108</sup> is particularly apparent when the design is compared to other contemporary schemes. The Official Architect in its review of the 1946 RIBA exhibition 'Building Now',<sup>109</sup> chose to illustrate a model of the LCC's Woodberry Down 8-storey block above a model of Tecton's Busaco Street Scheme. The text makes no reference to this comparison, but it is a very illuminating one. The Tecton scheme clearly shows how a single architectural approach has been applied consistently to both the plan and the design of the whole estate whereas the Woodberry Down blocks show hesitancy and a lack of any coherent and unified direction. For a fairer comparison the Woodberry Down block should be compared either to Tecton's project and winning entry for the Cement Marketing Company, already analysed, or Highpoint I, both of which like Woodberry Down used a monolithic concrete construction system in which the external walls were loadbearing.

The Woodberry Down block despite its articulated end units presents itself as a solid weighty box with flat unbroken façades. The balconies in their arbitrary pattern combine with the entrances to look like formal ornaments simply stuck on at the last minute and do not seem to relate to the underlying structure to which they are attached. This is the result

of treating the design of the blocks as façades to be composed and ornamented. This was the traditional approach to architectural design and one that the LCC architects would as students have learnt.<sup>110</sup>

The Entrance Façade. (plate 53) The use of five 'units' to make up the one long slab gave a central axis and sym<sup>m</sup>etry. The central recessed area of the block has 3 entrances and stairwells. The middle one forms the central axis with one either side. The end units therefore continue this sym<sup>m</sup>etry around the central axis and add weight and depth to the façade by projecting slightly and acting as separate wings. The plain expanse of concrete wall on the outer units at the ends was broken up by recessing very slightly the end few feet of wall, forming a vertical line which demar<sup>cates</sup> the outer limits of the whole block and compositionally contains the outward movement.

The flat outer skin of the block is also divided in a controlled balanced and classical manner by using horizontal course lines. The bottom one at second storey cill level creates the effect of a base plinth on which the whole block seems to sit, its height is about <sup>one eighth</sup> of the block. The second course line is placed at the top of the block at eighth-storey cill level. It is considerably deeper and thicker, projecting several inches which is sufficient to cast a shadow on the façade. The placing of this horizontal band has the effect of reducing the height of the eighth storey, making it appear as a clas<sup>s</sup>ical attic storey. The eighth-storey's reduced size is also exaggerated by the very heavy projecting cornice of the flat roof which acts as a demarcation and capping device to stop the eye from continuing upwards. Therefore horizontally the façade is divided into carefully proportioned sections, the weight and depth of the plinth matched by the narrow attic, both

strongly contained by the ground level and the projecting roof. These features are particularly derived from pre-war Swedish Neo-Classicism.

The same floor plan used on each floor generates vertical alignments of window apertures. Their size, derived from the size of the room they serve, gives another compositional element. The loadbearing outer walls meant that the windows had to form a relatively small amount of the total surface area of the façade, which creates a very solid effect as the ratio of void to wall is very low. The position of the windows are also sym<sup>m</sup>etrically placed around the central axis of the stairwell of each unit. The cill level is constant apart from the stairwell windows which due to the position of the stair floor at a mezzanine level forces the windows to be placed at a higher level on the outer façade.

To this austere classical façade only two further elements were added; entrances and balconies. The entrance to the flats are made into ceremonial procession ways by making them the formal focal point of each unit (plate 54). The size is exaggerated by the use of the slightly projecting rusticated banded slab in a contrasting finish and colour. In the centre is a recessed door balanced by small windows on either side. The side splays of the porch and the shallow three steps leading up to the door channel the eye through the opening.

The ground floor flats do not have balconies or terraces. The balconies on the other seven storeys are split between the two façades; the entrance façade provides balconies for storeys 2 to 5 and the rear façade for storeys 6 to 8. This subdivision is brought about by the need to provide emergency means of escape above the 5th storey by using interconnecting balconies that link two flats together. This was necessary as the maximum height the fire authorities could reach with

their ladders was 40 feet. To avoid making one façade unduly busy with balconies the architects split them between the entrance and rear façades. Storeys 2-5 had balconies leading off their living rooms whereas storeys 5-8 had them leading off from their bedrooms and kitchens.

The combination of the entrance and balconies on the entrance façade was used to make a simple balanced pattern. The weight of the rusticated entrance was capped by a larger balcony at 2nd storey level, with the smaller private balconies on storeys 3-5 forming a U pattern.

The entrance façade was therefore 'composed' in a totally arbitrary way by the use of horizontal course lines, projecting cornice of the roof, the size and placing of the balconies and the use of a decorative entrance surround.

Rear Façade. (plate 55) The symmetry of the entrance façade is reversed as the central block projects rather than the end wings. The same horizontal proportions and divisions are continued around the block. The devices used to articulate the slab are similar to those of the entrance façade; instead of the entrance and stairwell there is the refuse chute and bin room entrance, which are placed exactly opposite the entrance and stairs of the front façade, and balconies at storeys 6 to 8. The new feature is the lift motor room which breaks through the roof line. (plate 56)

**Refuse Chute:** The façade is subdivided into six sections by the refuse chutes. These present windowless vertical expanses of wall which slightly project to break up the flat windowed areas of wall. The entrance door to the bin room is kept to a minimal porch.

Lift Motor Room: The lift shaft breaks through the roof in the same position as the refuse chutes but in a different plane. The lift rooms themselves are used as a decorative motif and alternate from the end and central ones which are small cubic masses, to the larger middle ones which are rectangular. The use of porthole windows on the lift motor room and also at the top of the refuse chute acts as a linking device between the two.

Balconies: Due to their requirement to service two to three flats each they form long horizontal strips at the 6th-8th storey. They are again sym<sup>m</sup>metrically placed either side of the central axis and at the junction of the end units to the main block. This outer pair are longer as they service three flats not two, the end flat of the central block has access by a door in its bedroom on the projecting wall plus the two flats of the end unit. The outer balconies also continue over the refuse chute tower which adds further formal patterning.

The rear façade was therefore also composed in a totally arbitrary way by the placing of balconies and the variations and decorations of the lift motor rooms and the refuse chutes.

This composition therefore utilized different Historic and Contemporary 'styles'. The range of sources can be listed as

(i) Swedish Neo-Classicism: the use of plinth and attic motifs and the rustication of the entrance surrounds.

(ii) Modern Movement: reference to Modern architecture is made in (a) the use of concrete, (b) the flat roof, (c) cantilevered sun balconies, (plate 57) (d) metal windows (however their fenestration patterns were fussy and had vertical and horizontal subdivisions), (e) the use of porthole windows on the rear façade.

(iii) Art Deco: (1) the curving entrance splays and rounded corners in the style of cinema or hotel entrances, (2) the metal grilles to the drying balconies (plate 58) and the entrance windows which form very decorative geometric patterns, (3) the curving metal handrails to the balconies.

This stylistic eclecticism, combining three incompatible 'styles' into an awkward pastiche, in which none of the styles is applied in a pure form, creates dismal façades of great banality. The LCC architects' dilemma is clearly expressed - on the one hand they realise that the new 8-storey blocks should present a 'modern' image but at the same time they are quite incapable of working in a consistent modern style, which was quite out of the range of their experience and practice. The Woodberry Down 8-storey blocks illustrate the problems Forshaw had, and would have had if he had stayed, in getting good 'modern' designs, comparable to those of Tecton, out of his large staff of traditionally trained architects. Their training in design as the application of historic styles to façades was totally inappropriate for the new building type of high rise flats. The architectural staff under Howard had therefore shown themselves to be incapable of meeting the challenge posed to them by Forshaw's new planning principles which required "simple lofty white flat roofed buildings".<sup>111</sup>

Despite these criticisms, the Woodberry Down Estate represented the most advanced design and planning achievement of the LCC's housing (and remained as such until the work of Matthew's new department in 1950). Walker used the image of the 8-storey block as a cover for his pamphlet Housing: A survey of the Post-war housing work of the LCC 1945-49,<sup>112</sup> (plate 59), and used a water colour of an artist's impression of the



estate seen from the south (plate 60) as a frontispiece,<sup>113</sup> in a conscious attempt to make a direct comparison to the County of London Plan illustration of flats (plate 37).

Apart from the Stepney/Poplar Reconstruction area scheme, where these new architectural and planning concepts were reapplied to another comprehensive redevelopment site,<sup>114</sup> Woodberry Down was to remain an exceptional, one-off experiment. It was not, as Forshaw had hoped, taken up as a "model" for all subsequent post-war LCC housing development. With Forshaw's resignation, the way was left open to return to a pre-war approach to housing that primarily defined its function as the provision of the maximum number of dwellings at the most economical cost. This was the brief given to Walker, who on Forshaw's resignation was promoted to the new post of Director of Housing and Valuer, and thus took charge of the LCC's housing output from the 14th November 1945.

## 2.2 LCC HOUSING: THE WALKER PERIOD 1945-1950.

The period from November 1945 to December 1949, when the control of design and layout of LCC housing was under Cyril Walker<sup>1</sup> as Director of Housing and Valuer, seems after a superficial glance at the buildings constructed to be a period in which pre-war policies and plans were continued (with the exception of the new 8-storey reinforced concrete blocks, initiated under Forshaw's brief period as Architect to the Council, and described in the preceding section). This architectural perspective is misleading on two counts. Firstly Walker did not merely act as a caretaker ensuring rapid output of old designs, but rather assumed a far more positive and aggressive rôle which embodied a particular outlook and ideology on state housing. Secondly, his position came to be questioned during this period by a more radical ideology.

This section analyses the debates on housing policy at the LCC<sup>2</sup> with particular reference to the cottage estates,<sup>3</sup> and illustrates the significance of this debate for the subsequent housing policy of the 1950s. The development of the concept of "mixed development" will be examined and its various usages in the early 1940s analysed.<sup>4</sup> Within this framework the out-county estates of the LCC, planned and/or constructed in the period 1945-1950, will be assessed as well as the rôle they played in the contemporary debates on architecture and social engineering.

### LCC Housing Policy 1939-50: Cottage Estates.

Since the beginning of the 20th century the LCC had built cottage estates beyond the county area. From their first estates at <sup>Tottenham Fields in 1900,</sup> Norbury in 1902, and White Hart Lane in 1904, to the inter-war estate culminating in

the 'largest Municipal Housing Estate' at Becontree, the LCC had followed the two policies of (1) in-county high density flatted estates and (2) out-county low density cottage estates built along garden suburb principles. The reduction in out-county completions after 1928, when Col. Levita was replaced by Ernest Dence as Chairman of the Housing Committee, reflects both a shift in policy away from the garden suburb due to an increasing difficulty in purchasing new out-county sites, and also a new subsidy structure which favoured in-county slum clearance schemes.<sup>5</sup> This led to completions of LCC dwellings in 1938-39 being 76% flats, and in 1939-41, 90% flats. As far as a clearly stated policy went, the LCC in the inter-war years appears largely to have followed an opportunist approach, one of exploiting opportunities to the full, when and where they arose. This resulted in a concentration of in-county work in politically 'friendly' boroughs and an out-county concentration in Essex where little opposition was raised to an LCC invasion.

The rise to power of the Labour Party within the LCC, under the leadership of Herbert Morrison, which led to a majority over the Municipal Reform Party in 1934, only partially affected the direction of LCC housing policy. Whilst Labour's main thrust was to rebuild the slums of inner London<sup>6</sup> they also agreed at their Conference 'Housing Policy for London' in 1934 to support the advancement of a policy for satellite towns, as opposed to large dormitory estates for the working classes as at Becontree.<sup>7</sup> However, this party policy was in practice abandoned, as both Morrison<sup>8</sup> and Lewis Silkin<sup>9</sup> stated that due to the lack of finance or power, it was impossible for the LCC to implement such large schemes. Therefore during the 1930s the "LCC built where it could and the changes in its housing operation reflect not deliberate choices but responses to a shifting pattern of constraint".<sup>10</sup>

The pre-war policy was therefore flexible despite the party rhetoric, and the two different, though not mutually exclusive policies of in-county flats and out-county cottages, were continued up to the outbreak of war and during the war years. Herbert Westwood,<sup>11</sup> the Valuer from 1937, was responsible for continuing Frank Hunt's efforts of maintaining and implementing these two policies. He continued to search for and buy suitable sites on these policy premises until his death in 1944, when Walker was appointed as his successor.

Before 1945 the only attempt to question this policy was in 1944 when Silkin, then the Chairman of the LCC Town Planning Committee, suggested a revised attitude to the pyramid density structure of London. This was to thin out the inner areas and increase the density of the suburbs on the fringe of London.<sup>12</sup> This politically and socially radical proposal of putting large numbers of working class tenants in the middle class suburbs as opposed to isolated and self-contained working class dormitories was rejected by the Valuer and Comptroller on financial grounds as they considered the in-county estates had to be developed to the full to produce the urgently required housing after the war.

### The Greater London Plan

(i) The Green Belt debate. The pre-war housing approach of the LCC continued unopposed during the war. It was not until the publication of Abercrombie's Greater London Plan in 1945<sup>13</sup> that the main threat was posed to the LCC's practice of using green-belt sites for cottage estates. The plan's concept of a contained and decentralised London, surrounded by eight new satellite towns beyond an increased green-belt,<sup>14</sup> only allowed for a total of 125,000 persons in seven "Quasi-Satellite" dormitory groups to be placed within the green-belt. This restriction of post-war

LCC housing on out-county sites (115,000 LCC, 10,000 Croydon Borough Council) was given in paragraph 109 of the Greater London Plan: "These quasi-satellites will form dormitory groups and will involve their residents in daily travel... The principal justification for recommending them at all is an emergency one to meet the urgent post-war needs". Abercrombie's Greater London Plan, based on garden city principles of satellite towns and also Ebenezer Howard's concept of a community, developed the premise that "Town planning should envisage all the major interests of life". There was to be no place for further LCC working class out-county dormitory estates in Abercrombie's reconstructed London, based, as was the County of London Plan,<sup>15</sup> on notions of equity and social reform. The Greater London Plan therefore also represented a radical shift in ideology from the LCCs pre-war Housing Policy.

The Minister for Town and Country Planning in the new Labour government, Lewis Silkin, adopted Abercrombie's Greater London Plan proposals as official government policy. In 1943, in a Fabian Society pamphlet The Nation's Land Silkin had stated the need for a national planning scheme so that the responsible minister could "have complete and adequate control of all building which takes place... Unless there is a national plan and the Regional and Local Planning Authorities are very much larger than the existing ones, post-war planning will be as local and chaotic as it was before the war",<sup>16</sup> This statement, written whilst Silkin was Chairman of the LCC Town Planning Committee, was no doubt prompted by the realisation of his inability as chairman of that Committee to radically change LCC housing policy and to implement progressive policies with the development of satellite towns. Such aspirations had been impossible in normal market conditions without extra finance or power. For the progressive Labour members involved in housing

at the LCC the main enemy was the class bias of a capitalist economy, a point made clear by Silkin in Forward from Victory: "If planning is to serve the public interest in the future and put all the agreed principles into effect, it has to be free of this sectional interest..."<sup>17</sup>

The Greater London Plan with its socialist premises was easily accommodated into Labour Party policy. It became fully incorporated three weeks after the 1945 elections when Silkin introduced the idea of New Towns<sup>18</sup> and set up the Reith Committee.

The LCC's response to the Greater London Plan was mixed. The report of the Architect, Chief Engineer and Education Officer of 29th March 1946<sup>19</sup> accepted the government's principle of a planned decentralisation to prevent urban sprawl and opposed quasi-satellite dormitory groups. They saw the Greater London Plan as a continuation of the County of London Plan's principles. Walker's report<sup>20</sup> however attacked the Greater London Plan as idealistic. He considered the allocation of 115,000 persons in quasi-satellite areas to be insufficient for London's post-war housing need, especially as New Town sites had not by then been agreed, let alone started. He stated "It is obvious that the principle enunciated in the plan to provide satellite towns is based on a lack of knowledge of the Council's housing problem and of the Council's proposals in regard to quasi-satellite towns which are not contemplated to be entirely of a dormitory nature". He estimated the LCC required out-county sites for at most another 158,000 persons and was therefore looking for further sites, contrary to the Greater London Plan's green-belt proposals.<sup>21</sup> The Comptroller's report agreed with Walker and suggested that the Greater London Plan would entail considerable extra cost to LCC housing work.<sup>22</sup> The reports were considered at a special

meeting of the Housing and Public Health Committee on 10th May 1946. It was resolved that the Housing and Public Health Committee in general approved of the plan but:

- (i) no provision for housing out of county.
- (ii) in plan out-county estates given too little land by c. 5,333 acres.
- (iii) Satellite towns did not solve the immediate London Housing problems.
- (iv) Green belt proposals stop LCC from out-county work, therefore must treat Greater London Plan as "flexible" like the County of London Plan"<sup>23</sup>.

Two opposing views of the Greater London Plan were therefore admitted: one idealistic, which supported the concept of the plan in principle and another that rejected the abstract concepts of the Greater London Plan as inappropriate to the post-war housing shortage. This second view which followed from the idea that the number of houses constructed was more important than where or what was built, continued the pre-war policy of opportunism. This view was the dominant one in the LCC hierarchy from 1945 to 1950.<sup>24</sup> Latham, Leader of the Council, despite a token recognition of the County of London Plan and Greater London Plan, was more concerned with results, a reminder of his Fabian background and practical concern that voters would be more impressed by completion figures rather than abstract proposals.<sup>25</sup> Gibson, Chairman of the Housing and Public Health Committee<sup>26</sup> was also a strong supporter of out-county estate development and rapid production figures, and allied with Walker, the Valuer,<sup>27</sup> formed a formidable leadership for LCC housing policy.

The debate on green-belt sites was to come to the fore twice; first in 1946 over the purchase of the Chessington site, and again in 1949/50 after a review of the success of the New Towns in attracting Londoners.

(ii) The Chessington site. W.S. Morrison, Conservative MP for Cirencester and Silkin's predecessor as Minister of Town and Country Planning, had in 1945 stated that, "Acceptance of some of the sites proposed by the LCC for their immediate programme...has been conceded as a safety-valve measure, even though the sites do not wholly accord with desirable planning principles".<sup>28</sup> This first round of bargaining, allowed for in the Greater London Plan as seven sites, was soon extended. Walker proposed sites at Loughton (26th September 1945), St. Pauls Cray (20th February 1946), Oxley (3rd July 1946) Farnham Royal, Langley and Wexham, Slough (4th December 1946), Borehamwood (4th December 1945) and Chessington (23rd January 1946). It was the proposal to develop the Chessington site, one of natural beauty and visited by the Housing and Public Health Committee on 30th April 1946, that provoked the most hostile response. The site was first discussed by the Housing and Public Health Committee on 23rd January 1946 (and accepted by them on 3rd April 1946<sup>29</sup>). Walker stated in his report to the Housing and Public Health Committee:

I am of the opinion that a site at Chessington is best suited for the purpose but as this also is scheduled under the Greater London Plan for green-belt purposes, it is with some reluctance but with a strong conviction of the urgent necessity for acquiring the site<sup>30</sup> that I submit particulars for the consideration of the Committee.

The Housing and Public Health Committees approval was voted on in full LCC session on April 17th and despite an all party opposition, headed by J. Hare, a Conservative member of the Housing and Public Health Committee, and E. Denington a Labour member (not then on the Housing and Public Health Committee), the decision was carried and accepted to acquire the Chessington site. Whereas areas of Essex had not been vigorously opposed, the specific natural beauty of the Chessington site



was the main issue of the debate, rather than a more general party policy opposing working class estates in out-county areas. Both parties considered an LCC invasion with an 800 acre cottage estate on such a tract of land, singled out in the Greater London Plan specifically for green-belt, to be an outrage.

Letters of protest to The Times duly followed,<sup>31</sup> including one from G. Hutchinson, an LCC member, who attempted to oppose the decision at a LCC meeting in July. He claimed "the present policy of the council is a sham and a deception" because it had abandoned the Greater London Plan. The debate lasted four hours, during which both Latham and Gibson restated their belief in green-belt estates as a necessary step in the emergency situation. The motion was lost, but illustrated the strength of the opposition to Latham and Gibson's housing policies.<sup>32</sup>

A letter from Surrey County Council opposing the Chessington scheme prompted a further report from Walker.<sup>33</sup> He argued that the Chessington scheme was to be a balanced community with industry and public facilities and not "a housing estate wholly dormitory in character... Whichever way the matter is viewed it is obvious that further sites are needed, <sup>and</sup> the Chessington site would make a very suitable and valuable contribution towards this need". He also made the point that as green-belt land, (hence private property with no public right of way) the value of the site to the community was less than if people actually lived and worked there.

Not all the green-belt sites met with so much opposition. This aspect of seeing green-belt dormitory estates as complete communities was the line taken by Druce, the Chairman of Elstree Rural District Council, who met the Housing and Public Health Committee on 25th September 1946 to

discuss LCC proposals to develop a site at Borehamwood. Druce was sympathetic to Londoners' needs and offered his council's full help in the development of Borehamwood. However the Chessington site issue had involved LCC policy in a wider national debate.

It also involved Silkin as Minister of Town and Country Planning who had the final say on granting planning permission. Silkin had expressed his negative attitude to out-county estates before the war and was determined to protect his new "New Towns" policy<sup>34</sup> and keep the Greater London Plan intact.<sup>35</sup> He therefore informed the LCC in a letter of 9th October 1946 of his decision not to permit development of the Chessington site. Although aware of the LCC's housing needs and problems of site acquisitions he stated:

At the same time a halt must be called to the outward spread of London, which gathered such momentum in the years between the two world wars; and it was to prevent the areas already built up from being further cut off from open countryside that the principle of a green-belt - in the preservation of which your council have already shown their interest - was perpetuated and extended in the proposals of the Greater London Plan, and later accepted by the Government.

Any building in the green-belt area is plainly undesirable and it was only to make a start on the short term programme of urgent post-war housing that provision has been made for some 'quasi-satellite' development to take place.

The Minister has from time to time agreed, often with the greatest reluctance and solely under the pressure of urgent housing needs, to development by the county council and other housing Authorities in the green-belt area. He is clear however that where Chessington is concerned the Government's long term policy must prevail.<sup>36</sup>

He then went on to suggest smaller sites in Horsley, Reigate and Redhill. The Housing and Public Health Committee at their meeting of 9th October 1946 received the letter and resolved to cancel the purchase of the site.

Gibson and Walker were not deterred by the Chessington incident and

continued the search for further out-county sites. The next response of the Housing Committee<sup>37</sup> to criticism of their out-county policy was in 1947 when the Reith Committee's New Town proposals were considered.<sup>38</sup> A joint memo by Gibson, Chairman of the Housing Committee, and the Chairman of the Town Planning Committee stated at length their attitude to further restraints on LCC out-county site purchasing:

The rate of development of the New Towns will, like all other building operations be dependent upon the supply of labour and materials. Having regard to the legal delays which have already occurred, to the large scale civil engineering problems to be overcome and the necessity for erecting new factories on virgin sites it seems unlikely that the New Towns can make any substantial contribution to the relief of London housing problem for some years. The Council's out-county development is therefore in no way an alternative to the proposals for New Towns, but a short term measure to meet immediate difficulties on the lines envisaged in the Greater London Plan and the Minister's memo. Moreover, although the term 'quasi-satellite' has been attached to the council's proposed out-county development, we would point out that a real effort is being made, not only by providing opportunities for ancillary development essential for full community life, but also by the reservation of a total area of about 500 acres for industrial purposes, to avoid the creation of purely dormitory centres. Furthermore, while the types of dwellings now being erected to some extent provide for families with different incomes, to encourage the growth of communities of under income levels and to afford opportunity for greater variety in elevation, the Housing Committee are considering the introduction of further types of larger houses with improved amenities. While we look forward therefore to the successful development of the New Towns as essential to the fulfilment of the County of London Plan and Greater London Plan, we are agreed that to meet the pressing need to provide for the tens of thousands of London families who are looking anxiously to it to relieve their present anxieties, the Council must, for some years to come, rely mainly on its own efforts and must press on with the development of its out-county sites to supplement the accommodation mainly in blocks of flats, which is being provided within the County of London by the Council and MBC s. It may be found admissable, after further consultation with the Ministry of Town and County Planning and the planning authorities, to make some minor adjustments in the council's programme of out-county development by the substitution of more suitable sites for some of these already selected, but not<sup>39</sup> so as to increase the total capacity of the out-county sites.

Despite this comprehensive exposition of LCC post-war policy being couched in the terms and concepts of the County of London Plan and

Greater London Plan, it nevertheless highlights the ideological differences between Gibson and his stalwarts on the Housing Committee, and the new policies of Silkin and the Labour government. Although Gibson stressed the primacy of "urgency" generating his policy decisions, this was in reality merely a secondary question. The real debate was a much more complex one of two opposite ideologies on housing. One belonged to the tradition of 19th-century philanthropic housing for the working classes and the other was a broader conception of state housing as a major tool in the social and physical restructuring of society.

The struggle to secure out-county sites continued into the late 1940s; Merstham, two sites at Slough, Farnham Royal, Langley, and Sheerwater were publically opposed,<sup>40</sup> but these were eventually conceded by Silkin who had earlier stated that he regretted "the necessity for development in the green-belt ring...but felt it necessary in places to agree".<sup>41</sup> To allow for the slow start to New Town building he agreed to increase the allowance made by Abercrombie of 125,000 persons housed in the green belt to 197,000.

The struggle for inner city sites and the realisation that the developing New Towns were failing to have a major effect on decentralisation since they were attracting as many families from outside the London area as from within,<sup>42</sup> brought the continuing debate to the fore again in 1950. The leading article in The Times of August 5th 1950 summarised the main dilemmas,<sup>43</sup> It saw economic constraints as the key factor; the government was disinclined to relocate more industry out of London and so interfere with the massive export drive required for economic recovery and stability after the 1947-48 slump. Therefore they were not pushing for decentralisation despite the pressing social needs.

This delay in New Town development was seen by H. Molson in his letter to The Times<sup>44</sup> as the direct cause of allowing the LCC to "invade" the green-belt. This provoked a response by Gibson<sup>45</sup> who restated his argument of "urgent need", which was in turn attacked by G. Hutchinson<sup>46</sup> who pointed out that the post-war out-county estates had failed to attract industry (he gives the figure of only 865 new jobs in 1951, whilst the estimated labour force of 8,600 would eventually grow to 21,000) and that the LCC should have accepted the New Town policies when first introduced in 1946 and stopped work on out-county estates. This series of letters ended with a rebuke from Abercrombie, Barlow and Clement Davies who wrote jointly, claiming that their reports were being ignored and that they wished the government to state what their policy was.<sup>47</sup>

The replacement of Gibson as Chairman of the Housing Committee in 1950 marked the end of the green-belt out-county dormitory estate battle.<sup>48</sup> Gibson's successor Reginald Stamp, with Evelyn Denington as Vice Chairman, had a different attitude to LCC housing policy and thus made a break with policies that ultimately derived from the early 1900s. Although in the 1950s the LCC were still anxious to secure further out-county sites, their search was conditioned by an acceptance of the New Town and Expanded Town policies. Further out-county building was restricted to the extension of existing estates or the development of existing towns and the development of the LCC's own New Town, first projected for Hook and later built at Thamesmead.

The consequences of this lengthy debate were to polarise the housing work of the LCC for the first post-war years into out-county cottage estates and in-county flatted estates. The out-county developments as

neither full satellite towns nor mere 'dormitories' were a planning anomaly. Their existence, based on negative arguments, illustrated a pre-war ideology of state housing. To planners, architects and politicians they were an unwanted form, inappropriate to the new post-war attitudes as stated in the Greater London Plan. The gradual attack on the LCC's involvement in out-county building therefore had major implications for the post-war housing policy. From 1950 onwards it focused attention firmly on high density inner urban development, based upon a pyramidal density structure as described in the County of London Plan. The debate concerning the planning principles of the Greater London Plan for the reconstruction of London in the immediate post-war period is therefore of major importance for the understanding of the subsequent development of LCC housing policy and more especially for assessing the particular problems to be faced by the new Housing Division of the Architects' Department established in 1950.

(iii) Mixed development: The concept of 'mixed development' has already been discussed in its architectural definition in connection with the County of London Plan and the development of Woodberry Down estate.<sup>49</sup> Closely associated with this definition based on formal variety, was another that conceived of a social rather than architectural mix. Abercrombie discussed the concept of the community in the Greater London Plan.<sup>50</sup>

Sociologists and others who have studied the effects of housing and planning policy between the wars have put some of the main arguments in a negative way. The almost unanimous conclusion is that the 'general welfare' has not been appreciably improved, and indeed, has often been harmed by what is commonly called suburban development. This kind of development in its most characteristic form has been marked by excessively large areas of housing occupied by people of one income group with little provision for other related buildings. These large aggregations created problems both socially and administrative of quite needless difficulty. The social problems

stemmed from the income and age group segregation of the population, and the administrative blurring of all boundaries, administrative and natural.

The kind of suburban development he is referring to is presumably the LCC inter-war out-county estates such as Becontree. Criticism of the social consequences of such large council estates, whether inner city or outer suburban had been voiced before the war and it was this aspect of state housing that was taken up by Aneurin Bevan as Minister of Health and Housing in the 1945 Labour Government. Bevan in a debate in the House of Commons<sup>51</sup> analysed above, gave a review of Labour's housing policy. He considered the post-war housing problem to be particularly associated with housing for low income groups, a "problem not solved since the Industrial Revolution", which would be tackled not by speculative builders who made houses for higher income groups before the war, but by local authorities. The new local authority building would however be radically different, and the pre-war "castrated communities"<sup>52</sup> where colonies of low-income tenants lived in houses separate from those of high-income groups were to be abolished:

That segregation of different income groups was a wholly evil thing from a civilised point of view and was condemned by anyone who paid the slightest attention to civics and engenics. It was a monstrous infliction upon the essential psychological and biological life of the community. They had to produce what he called twilight villages".<sup>53</sup>

The concept of an ideal mixed income<sup>54</sup> community, taken from the Greater London Plan was common policy in Labour reconstruction plans. Silkin's speech at the conference "Building our New Towns"<sup>55</sup> developed the concept further; "They had not only to create the towns but also a new type of citizen who could lead a fuller life. One of the most important needs was the creation of 'mixed development'. People of

different income levels and social habits should live together as one community". This frank espousal of a socialist concept of social engineering looked to planning and architecture as a means for its implementation. For the Labour Government, politics, planning and architecture were firmly linked.

Justification for this policy was given by Bevan,<sup>56</sup>

mix classes or else social disturbances would arise as a result of unbalanced life... It would do the well-to-do members of the community a great deal of good to be brought up against the wholesome robustness of the lower income groups. If professional workers were more mixed up with other classes...there would be less tendency among them towards Bloomsburyism.

To enforce this Bevan stated that larger houses would be built the following year and communal facilities would be planned for and built later. This apparent reversal of class hierarchy - that is the nobility of the working class replacing the respectability of the middle classes, was part of the reaction to pre-war Toryism and an expression of old class differences. The Labour Government also compared their efforts to the Tory Governments achievement after the First World War in order to show the "superiority of socialist principle over the Tory principle".<sup>57</sup>

The conversion of this party dogma into doctrine occurred in 1949 in the Housing Bill of that year.<sup>58</sup> The Bill "breaks with the idea that housing can be planned in isolation for one class alone and without regard to the services, institution and amenities needed to turn dwellings into a community, a tradition which found its supreme expression in one class dormitory housing estate of between the wars",<sup>59</sup> The phrase working class was replaced in the act by "housing conditions and housing needs of all members of the community".<sup>60</sup> The aim of this equalitarianism was to provide a "house for every family" and conceive of



"houses as a social service to be provided rather than as commodities to buy and sell".<sup>61</sup> H. Morrison added to this discourse in 1950 in an article 'Middle classes in Labour's scheme'.<sup>62</sup> He said: "we must abandon any idea of rigid class relationships. The best answer to communist conceptions of unhealthy or violent class war and the conservative champions of privilege is to break down the barriers which separate the classes". That is, barriers which literally physically separated classes in the environment.

The concept of "mixed development" was fully articulated by the late 1940s and its premises and justification public ly debated. The challenge had therefore been given to the local authorities to physically reconstruct a Socialist Britain.

The LCC's response centred mainly on the development of its out-county estates. As early as 7th June 1944 the Housing and Public Health Committee discussed a letter from the London Liberal Party urging the LCC to provide homes for professional and middle class families on its estates. Already, as an interim measure the Committee had in 1943 agreed to build just over 9%<sup>63</sup> of the dwellings at Hainault Estate and Hanwell as special larger type houses (LP4 and LP5, semi-detached cottages with 3 bedrooms, 1 living room and area of 1,018 sq.ft, and 3 bedrooms, 1 living room, 1 parlour and area of 1,078 sq.ft respectively).<sup>64</sup>

However, it was not until July 1947 that the Housing Committee considered new type plans for larger houses<sup>65</sup> specially aimed at professional workers. The Housing Committee approved six new types; V7, V6, V6a, V6b, V6c and LV.5b (plates 61-66) on 16th July 1947. The Finance Committee<sup>66</sup> concurred if;

- (1) the Minister allows them
- (2) for the first 12 months not to exceed 5% of total for estate
- (3) economic rents charged not taking into account Government subsidies.

Walkers agreed with this (apart from item (3); he had thought of charging a rent £17 deficient, ie., £5 less than the average state subsidy of £22). He stated:

What I had in mind was that such houses would be useful in accommodating managerial and sub-managerial personnel of factories and commercial undertakings to be erected on the individual portions of the estates - the surrounding areas thus securing a measure of mixed development on our new estates. The question of whether such applicants could afford a full economic rent would depend upon a number of circumstances.

The 'measure' of mixed development was literally translated into no more than 5% of total dwellings as larger houses. Accordingly layout plans for existing sites were adjusted; St. Pauls Cray (14th April 1948 and 28th September 1949), Oxley (25th January 1950), Harold Hill (7th March 1950) and Aveley<sup>e</sup> (22nd March 1950). The 'mixed development' was therefore understood by the LCC as a dormitory out-county estate, adjusted to include 5% larger houses for the managers of factories and shops which were to have specific sites set aside for them. The community was therefore to be an industrial microcosm of managers and workers enclosed in a self-contained area, in which the distinction between these two rôles of manager and worker was to be articulated by planning and architecture. However this conception of a community hardly conformed to Abercrombie's "all major interests of life".

The problem of encouraging industry to take advantage of cheap sites and available labour on the LCC sites was of grave concern to the Housing Committee. Industry was discouraged from any movement by the Board of Trade. The committee asked Walker to report on the situation of

out-county estates on 7th March 1950, which he presented at the meeting of 7th July 1950.<sup>68</sup> The committee resolved to urge the Board of Trade to send industry to their out-county estates but especially to the Aveley, Hainault and Harold Hill estates.

The resulting 'mixed development' of the LCC out-county estates in fact had very little 'mix'. Few factories, few jobs, a minimal mix of housing types and no communal or public facilities produced a bleak environment very similar to Becontree. The post-war out-county estates therefore hardly matched up to the optimistic visions of Bevan and Silkin and continued the pre-war tradition of 'castrated communities', and did little to discourage Morrison's fear of Communist class war or Conservative privilege.

(iv) Architectural expression of the Greater London Plan. Bevan envisaged not only social and planning aspects in his mixed development, but also architectural ones:

one of the consequences of segregation was to create an insistence on uniformity. It was very difficult for architects responsible for the layout of municipal housing schemes to arrange their houses in varied architectural compositions if they were to be houses<sup>69</sup> for the same type of people, and if they had to be the same size.

He also assessed the pre-war local authorities work as "aesthetically of a far higher standard" than that of private enterprise which "one cynic had called the Marzipan period - monstrous crimes committed against aesthetics".<sup>70</sup> Again Bevan seems to be getting his ideas from Abercrombie's Greater London Plan. In the 'preamble' to the Greater London Plan, under "Realisation and Design and Amenities", Abercrombie wrote:

Nevertheless it must be stated with the greatest emphasis that the

most logical and sociological scheme conceivable on paper will ultimately be judged by its realisation in works of architecture, engineering and landscape. There is not only scope, but the necessity for the highest skill in every direction in the design of buildings, singly or in the mass.<sup>71</sup>

He expanded on the importance of architectural aesthetics:

The builders say that the public at large is responsible, they either have a romantic hankering for sham Tudor and stained glass or a smart clamour for bogus modernism, and they all agree in a horror of anything that looks like a council house (frequently the work of a competent architect)...It would be possible, or rather desirable, in view of the present transitional condition of architectural design, to group the architects according to their affinities, in order that different sites might present coherent effects: thus there might be an early Lutyens-Parker Group, a Welwyn-Roehampton Georgian, a Jellicoe-Kenyon Moderate, a Conell-Wardian Advanced and a Gropius-Stark Modernist...but it would probably be found that thoughtful conscientious design in these various but consistently used manners would satisfy a public which will accept artistic direction accompanied by near solid social comfort and convenience.<sup>72</sup>

The five architectural styles or affinities, as Abercrombie calls them, offered a comprehensive range of options from Traditional to Modernist. Abercrombie does not here appear to be enforcing any one single aesthetic appropriate for the new reconstructed London. However the two illustrations by Peter Shephard used to show what reconstructed West Ham and Ongar might look like (plates 67 and 68) both adopt a definitely "modern" aesthetic. The West Ham perspective shows a couple of rows of modest terraces around a central green opening onto a vista of a 10-storey white concrete slab block of flats. The block hovers above the ground on rows of 'pilotis' and resembles very closely housing schemes by Tecton. Equally 'modern' is the view of a shopping centre for Ongar, with a pedestrian shopping precinct surrounded by a 1-storey perimeter range which is carefully contrasted to 4 storey blocks set at right angles, including a delightful, glass-fronted, concrete Ritz cinema. As the only illustrations indicating future development, the

inference is that the appropriate image for reconstruction of a socialist Britain is either a Con<sup>n</sup>ell-Wardian advanced or a Gropius Stark Modernist.

#### Design and Layout of LCC Out-County Estates.

This analysis of the design and layout of the out-county estates will assume no distinction between the layouts accepted under Forshaw before December 1945 and those between December 1945 to December 1950 under Walker. It is probable that the architects working under Forshaw (whose rôle was administrative and advisory rather than as a designer) on out-county estates were the same as those who were transferred under Sidney Howard to the new Housing and Valuation Department in 1946,<sup>73</sup> and that a continuity of ideas existed between the two groups.

Forshaw's joint report with the Valuer and Engineer on the Councils' Housing Standards submitted to the Dudley Committee in 1942<sup>74</sup> included a section on cottage estates which despite its limited scope followed basic garden suburb ideas, with a stress on planning. Forshaw's position as regards out-county estates appears rather ambivalent. That he would have been against any invasion of the green-belt with dormitory estates is without doubt, but his power to influence the LCC Housing Committee<sup>75</sup> on this issue is very doubtful. Abercrombie, with the co-operation of Forshaw, had reluctantly allowed sites for a maximum development of 125,000 persons in the green-belt which he probably realised was already by 1944 a 'fait accompli'. Forshaw made no attempt to intervene with out-county estate development. In fact, when he argued for a stop to development of in-county sites which conflicted with the County of London Plan, he gave as one of the points in his defence the fact that the cottage estates were not affected by the plan, and hence "offered plenty of scope for the first year's building programme".<sup>76</sup> Forshaw's only

positive contribution to post-war cottage-estates apart from overseeing the site layout plans, was the preparation of post-war cottage type plans, the P series, based on the Ministry of Health's Housing Manual 1944. These however were shortly afterwards revised and enlarged to the V plans which were accepted by the Housing and Public Health Committee on 30th July 1946.

The development of the V-type plans<sup>77</sup> must be assumed to be the work of Mr. W.L. Ward and his team of sectional architects. The revised V-types followed recommendations in the Ministry of Health Housing Circular 200/45 which increased the minimum suggested superficial areas from 900 to 950 sq.ft. To this list was added the seven further types for larger houses introduced on 21st November 1947.<sup>78</sup> A total variety of 17 standard types were therefore available for use on cottage estates, their "elevational treatment varied according to the requirements of the individual sites and their surrounding, but within the prescribed limits of costs".<sup>79</sup> In terms of formal variety the 17 type plans offered a minimal choice:

P1	—	Single-storey one room bungalow, used at ends of terraces
P3	—	
V4		All 2-storey, simple rectangular ground plans. Used in pairs or terraces. Variety only in roof treatment and porch detailing.
V4a		
V5	—	
LV4		
LV4N		
LV5		
LV5a	—	
LV5b		Separate garage, set back front door, plain bay window at rear
V6		Separate garage, simple rectangle plan, bay window.
V6A		Integral garage projecting to form separate wing.
V6B		Integral garage projecting stairwell with low roofline.
V6C		Corner unit, L shaped, bay window.
V7		Separate garage. Large rectangle, bay windows.

All were 2-storey except the old peoples' bungalows. More importantly,

the types that made up 90 - 95% of the dwellings on the estates were all simple rectangles to be used in pairs or terraces. Variety could only be achieved by (1) spacing and position to road/green/cul-de-sac (2) by using different facing materials (3) by varying roof treatment and (4) by varying the porch detailing. The possibility of providing a lively variety of elevational treatment, as had been the case in the early inter-war estates, was impossible due to the demands of the Finance Committee who were constantly urging the Housing and Public Health Committee to reduce the cost of housing<sup>80</sup> in an inflationary period when basic materials and labour were in short supply and very expensive. The opportunity for architectural variety was therefore extremely limited. However in Walker's pamphlet Housing: A Survey of the post-war Housing work of the LCC 1945-49 the text optimistically states: "Much thought has been given to the problems of appearance and none of the estates offer that impression of drab monotony which so often may be associated with estates of the inter-war period... An effort has been made to introduce colour into the elevation of the houses",<sup>81</sup> Despite this contention most of the areas of housing on the out-county estates were excessively dull, very austere and devoid of variety of details. Together with the expansive low density layout patterns the effect was one of large uniform areas of similar housing.

(1) Harold Hill and Sheerwater estates. Design, planning and social order. Analysis of two of the LCC's fifteen post-war out-county estates will suffice to illustrate the attempt that was made to build complete communities. Harold Hill Estate, Romford, Essex, the largest of the out-county estates and Sheerwater, Woking, Surrey, the smallest, will be analysed.

The main point of interest is to assess to what degree the Council managed to produce a mix of building types to facilitate a socially balanced community. Walker had in 1947 in a report on the new larger V-type plans, already quoted,<sup>82</sup> talked of their use for managerial and sub-managerial personnel of factories, and that they would secure a "measure" of mixed development. In a lecture two years later he described the Council's mixed development policy thus:

The new policy of the Council is to endeavour to create housing estates representing a complete cross-section of the population. Accordingly...at the bigger out-county estates larger type houses are planned to cater for the needs of the professional and managerial classes. The houses provide more spacious rooms and a cloak room opening from the hall, with lavatory basin and w.c. The constant hot water supply will be used to provide heated towel rails and a proportion of the new houses will have their own garages...Pending the establishment of health centres at large cottage estates, arrangements are made for doctors to be allocated suitable accommodation...and these larger type houses will obviously be particularly suited for this purpose. The result of this new social experiment in municipal housing is awaited with some interest<sup>83</sup>

In the same speech he also directly referred to the Harold Hill estate as a "fully balanced and complete community" and as equivalent to "building a small town in itself, and every effort is being made to make them self-contained communities".<sup>84</sup> These quotes from 1949 therefore show that Walker had developed his ideas of mixed development quite considerably from his views of 1947 which only talked of a "measure" of mixed development.

The terminology used to describe these new larger V types is also of interest. In the context of the LCC Housing Committee, reviews in journals, Walker's lecture, and the pamphlet Housing: a Survey of the post-war housing work of the LCC 1945-1949 they are variously described as (1) houses for Higher Income groups, (2) houses for the professional and managerial classes or (3) larger houses for mixed development. The



complete cross-section of the community that Walker refers to is therefore defined either as one divided by income or by class. To all intents and purposes these distinctions are purely semantic ones, and the concept of income level and class have become synonymous.

The use of the concept of income group is primarily a device taken from Bevan's rhetoric to suggest an equality in post-war society. By abandoning the traditional distinction between the working and the middle classes, all sections of society are seen as workers, ranging from un-skilled to skilled to managerial to professional. This equalisation of society has therefore been brought about only by a semantic quibble. Whether the term class or income group is used, a divided society is still the result.

The composition of the higher income group or managerial and professional class can be further analysed by looking at the new tenants of the LCC's larger V type houses. Prior to a visit of the Housing (Management) Sub-Committee to the St. Paul's Cray estate in March 1950, a report by the Valuer listed the occupations of those tenants living in the higher income group houses<sup>85</sup> as:

- 2 doctors, a dentist and an eye specialist
- 2 journalists.
- 2 high ranking police officers
- Chief of the RAF volunteer reserve
- Chief chemist of a local factory
- 2 accountants
- 2 consulting engineers
- 11 civil servants.

The Council had therefore successfully managed to attract the managerial and professional classes to their new higher income group houses. They had also clearly excluded, either economically (by the charging of non-subsidised rents) or by careful vetting of possible tenants, all

other classes from occupying these houses.

The fully balanced and complete community had therefore two clear divisions, a working class section and a middle class section composed of managerial and professional workers. This definition therefore does not include, or make reference to, the owners of the factories or the employers of the professional workers. These rôles or positions are left out of this definition of a reconstructed post-war society. Ownership can therefore be seen to be in the hands of either (1) the State itself, where ownership has been nationalised or (2) still privately controlled. The ambiguity of this social structure therefore blurs the issue of ownership and who is in control of the means of production. In other words, this model society could be either an expression of the advanced capitalist economy where ownership is in the hands of a dominant property owning class, or of a socialist State where the State itself controls industry and employs all workers, be they unskilled, skilled or professional. Depending upon one's perspective, the structuring of new and complete communities along these lines could be seen to be either radical or reactionary.

The site of Harold Hill, Romford, Essex, at nearly 1,400 acres was the largest of the post-war out-county sites. The plan allowed for 553 acres to be developed as housing, and at a density of 13.2 dwellings per acre, meant a projected population of over 27,000 residents. In terms of communities, as defined in the County of London Plan, this scale of development was large enough to be considered as at least two separate neighbourhood units. This was infact how the site was planned with an east and west neighbourhood unit around a central public park. Shopping centres and welfare buildings were provided for each unit, and around

these were grouped 3-storey blocks of flats and old people's dwellings. The main town centre was located in the centre of the western neighbourhood.

This development plan was revised in 1949, (as illustrated in the pamphlet LCC Housing 1945-1949<sup>86</sup>) and accepted by the Housing Committee in March 1950,<sup>87</sup> to provide 182 houses for the higher income groups. These were located in the north-east corner of the site (plates 69,70,71,72,73) facing the green-belt zone (figure 3). The choice of grouping all the higher income group houses together in this position forms a separate and distinct area which was (1) furthest away from the main road to London on which the industrial area had been planned, (2) furthest away from the central shopping area, (3) closest to the undeveloped green-belt land with mature trees and planting and (4) on the periphery of the estate and opposite the existing middle class residential properties of Noak Hill Road. The total number of these higher income group houses only accounted for 2.5% of the total number of dwellings for the two neighbourhood units. Therefore in this community the managerial and professional class only represented 1 in 40 of the households.

This pattern of segregation and limited number of higher income group houses is also seen in the development of the Sheerwater Estate, Woking, Surrey. This estate at only 231 acres was the smallest of the post-war out-county estates. It was planned as late as 1949<sup>88</sup> and from the start it was intended to have higher income group houses. It therefore represents in its use of design and planning a complete example of the Council's attempt to build a balanced community. As at Harold Hill the bulk of the higher income group houses were planned to be

located in a separate section of the estate. They were placed in the north-east corner which was cut off from the main estate by the Basingstoke Canal (figure 4). This area of land faced a golf course and an existing middle class residential development.

The only area where the two types of development meet is at the east end of Albert Drive. The contrast between the V6b higher income semis, for the professional and managerial classes, and the LV5a semis for the higher paid skilled workers, which face each other (plates 74 and 75) at this point is very marked. The large V6b semis with their integral garage and long drive are seen through a screen of mature trees. Their complex roof pitch with end gables provides more architectural content than the simple rectangular box of the LV5a. Both in terms of planning and design the estate reinforces these income or class differences.

The major signifiers of this class distinction were:

Layout: the physical position of the dwelling on the site determines its place in the estate's social hierarchy, the most favoured position being in the separate section in the north-east corner on the other side of the canal. Next is the east end of Albert Drive, followed by roads furthest away from the shops and industrial area. Associated with position on the estate is the road layout pattern and road width. The higher income groups in the north-east section are grouped around two cul-de-sacs, Paxton Gardens and Priory Close. These are planted with mature trees and have broad grass verges giving a wide and open character (plate 76). In contrast the rest of the estate is formed by link roads and crescents which are not so well planted, have narrow verges and are more densely built with mainly terrace housing closely fronting the road, eg. Bentham Avenue (plate 77).

Building Type: the estate has a range of building types from 3-storey flat blocks to large detached houses (see plates 78,79,80,81 and 82). Size of property was a major signifier of status. Walker had outlined the Council's use of dwellings of different size:

to make provision for all needs. The proportion of various sizes of dwellings are broadly as follows:

one-room dwellings.....	5%
two-room dwellings.....	10%
three-room dwellings.....	40%
four-room dwellings.....	35%
five room and over.....	10%

Thus it will be seen that by providing dwellings of various sizes in each scheme, the Council is able to offer accommodation to families of all sizes.<sup>89</sup>

However the size of the house did not only reflect the size of the family. It was more a case of total floor area rather than merely the number of rooms. A P3 three-room terrace house had an overall area of 746 sq.ft. whereas the largest V7 type had double this area at 1,500 sq.ft. It was also quite conceivable that a professional childless couple would live in a V7 house and an unskilled couple with two children in a P3 house. Therefore size of house was more closely related to status, income or class rather than the number of inhabitants.

The size of the house also related to the size of the plot it was built on. Larger houses had larger gardens and were set back further from the road. The larger higher income group houses also had garages and drives which further differentiated them.

Detailing: the estate was built using the same basic materials for all the buildings. Multi-coloured bricks and yellow stockbricks were the structural building materials. Metal windows and tiled roofs were also consistently used. There was therefore no hierarchy of materials, but

rather a difference of architectural content and detailing. An analysis of entrance ways illustrates this clearly. The 3-storey blocks of flats have short concrete paths leading to the common entrance to the flats. The door surround has minimal detailing and is set in a wall area covered with ceramic tiles (plate 83). The smaller terrace houses, P3, also have short concrete paths leading to the front door. The detailing of the door is very simple, relying upon the doors glazing bars to add interest. The main feature is the thin skylight above the door which has a chevron glazing pattern (plate 84). The slightly larger LV4 semis are the same as the P3 terrace but with the addition of a simple porch. This concrete slab which just covers the width of the front door is supported on ironwork of vertical bars (plate 85). The large detached V6c has the most complex entrance area, with a concrete porch projection which unites the roof of the living room bay window with the porch. This porch area is extended to form a larger sheltered area defined by painted trellis work with an attached trough for flowers. This entrance way is approached by a tiled pathway (plate 86).

The degree of detailing and sophistication of the dwelling's entrance was therefore a clear signifier of social status. Other features that were similarly used as signifiers of class position were bay windows, size of windows, garage, roof design - the use of gables and extended rooflines to the ground floor, double aspect - as in the V6c house for corner sites, and patterned brickwork. The V6b semis (plate 87) and the V6c detached house (plate 88) with their accumulation of all these signifiers were definitely meant to express a relationship to a middle class house that one would see at the Ideal Home exhibition, rather than to a Council house built by a local authority.

Sheerwater therefore clearly articulated, by the use of planning and design, a society that is divided into two distinct social groups. Whether these groups are defined by class, occupation or income level, Sheerwater, as a model estate reflecting an ideal post-war socialist society, does little to break down pre-war class divisions. By locating the higher income group houses in separate areas at both the Harold Hill and Sheerwater estates, class distinctions and divisions were physically and architecturally reinforced. The degree of "mix" and "balance" was therefore very limited, with only between 2.5 and 5.0% of the houses for the higher income groups. Thus the overall effect at both Harold Hill and Sheerwater was little different from the Council's pre-war dormitory estates and they fall far short of the kind of developments that Bevan had had in mind to prevent "Bloomsburyism" and "social disturbances". Walker's "new social experiment in municipal housing" had therefore been a very limited foray into the realm of social engineering.

#### Design and Layout of LCC in-County Estates 1945-1950.

In this analysis of the architectural content of the buildings constructed under Walker's control as Director of Housing and Valuer, the case of the flatted estates of 1946-1949 must briefly be mentioned. The special case of the Woodberry Down Estate has already been considered; however the bulk of in-county work in this period was of conventional 5-storey blocks based on pre-war designs. By June 1949, 5,700 flats had been completed and a further 5,856 were in construction. The pamphlet Housing: a Survey of the post-war Housing work of the LCC 1945-49 stated:

The necessity of ensuring the most economical forms of construction as well as the maximum housing value from available sites has hitherto enforced to some extent a certain uniformity of appearance and more particularly of building height. Thus the 5-storey block prevails, which in the opinion of those responsible for this

programme offers the greatest economy under present day shortages and restrictions.<sup>90</sup>

The pre-war 5-storey balcony access block was adapted to give slight increases in standards of space and amenity to keep in line with the recommendations in the 1944 Housing Manual. Neo-Georgian façades with brick detailing were the norm for most blocks, eg Tufnell Park estate (plate 89), plus a few blocks that had curved corners and balconies with an emphasis on horizontal banding: Tanners Hill Estate, Deptford (plate 90); Highbury Estate, Islington (plate 91); and Gascoyne Estate, Hackney (plate 92). However one of the more significant developments of the Walker period was the Kingswood Estate, Dulwich. This estate was the first LCC post-war scheme to use the grounds of an old mansion with mature grounds. It is therefore the direct forerunner to the later Ackcroydon and Alton developments in Wandsworth, and gives some idea of how these sites might have been developed if the control of housing had stayed in the hands of the Director of Housing and Valuer.

(1) The Kingswood Estate. The site of Kingswood House and its grounds of some 37 acres was an exceptional one. Set in a prime residential area near Dulwich College, on a sloping site with plenty of mature trees, it provided a perfect area for developing a complete neighbourhood unit. In the County of London Plan it was scheduled for development at a density of 100 ppa, and thus at nearly 40 acres was of sufficient size to allow for a "mixed development". The scheme (plate 93) was designed in 1948 by S. Howard (Housing Architect), J.W. Oatley (Senior Architect) and A.E. Long (Architect-in-charge).<sup>91</sup> The scheme followed basic County of London Plan principles, and was similar in many ways to the Woodberry Down Estate. The main difference was that due to the particular nature of the site's position it was deemed necessary to



keep to the low density of just under 100 ppa, and to restrict the highest block height to only 4-storeys.<sup>92</sup>

The restriction of block height to a maximum of 4-storeys, plus the positioning of these blocks on the lower lying ground, ensured that the estate would be practically invisible from College Road. Compared to the County of London Plan proposals for mixed development at 100 ppa density where 8-storey flats were used,<sup>93</sup> the Kingswood scheme, by keeping to a maximum of 4-storeys effectively reduced the amount of cottage development possible. The County of London Plan's theoretical layout at 100 ppa allowed for 55.8% of the dwellings as houses. The Kingswood scheme had only 12% as houses, the majority of dwellings, 80% being in 3-and 4-storey blocks of flats.<sup>94</sup>

The Kingswood Estate therefore failed to produce a high degree of 'mix' in the types of dwelling used, nor to exploit the relatively low overall density figure to achieve a high proportion of houses to flats. This resulted in a fairly monotonous layout dominated by 4 storey blocks. This effect is only relieved by the mature trees and planting and the retention of Kingswood House in the middle of the estate to act as a community centre.

In terms of design and planning the Kingswood estate showed few advances. The 2-storey terraced houses (plates 94 and 95) were of the same design as used at Woodberry Down. The planning of the estate centred around Kingswood House (converted to a community centre) and the shopping precinct (plate 96) followed County of London Plan neighbourhood planning principles. Architecturally the blocks, all in traditional brick construction, differed only slightly from the Council's pre-war work. The traditional balcony access tenement block was only thinly

disguised by the application of some 'modern' detailing (plates 97 and 98): metal windows, corner windows, porthole windows, an emphasis upon horizontal and vertical features and a block forming a bridge over an estate access road. All of these features, taken from a variety of pre-war Modern Movement buildings, combine uneasily in the one block and make an odd contrast with the traditional 19th-Century brick banding patterns. As at Woodberry Down the architects in Walker's Housing and Valuation Department produced an additive and derivative style that failed to be either consistently modern or traditional.

The Kingswood Estate was a key yardstick by which to measure the success of Walker's approach to housing. By comparison with other contemporary developments, like Churchill Gardens, Pimlico, Walker's Kingswood scheme (which was already under construction in 1949 at the time of the criticism of the LCC's Housing work) could only have reinforced the Housing Committee's doubts as to the architectural competence and quality of the work coming out of the Director of Housing and Valuer's Department. With the other major new sites of similar quality and size already purchased in Wandsworth, the Housing Committee could no longer afford to prevaricate on matters concerning design.

(ii) Gibson and Walker's policy questioned. The result of following policies that had regarded architectural content as only of marginal concern led to widespread criticism of both the cottage estates and the flatted estates. This public debate led to a parallel internal questioning by LCC members of the validity of Gibson and Walker's policies. This opposition came from both parties at the LCC. The Conservative move was once more headed by J. Hare who tried with J. Freemantle<sup>95</sup>, at the meeting of the Housing Committee of 12th February

1947, to move a motion to appoint two new Sub-Committees to investigate (1) layout and design in general and (2) to look at each estate plan in detail. The motion was lost, but Hare tried again on 18th May 1949 at which time the Committee decided to ask the Clerk and Director of Housing and Valuer to report on the proposals. By 31 October 1949 the Committee finally resolved to appoint a further two Sub-Committees to the existing Housing Management Sub-Committee. These were the "Housing and Town Planning Joint Development Sub-Committee", to look at out-county estates, and a "Housing Development Sub-Committee", to look at flatted schemes. E. Denington, the Vice Chairman of the Housing Committee was elected to Chair both Sub-Committees, sharing office with Fiske, the Chairman of the Town Planning Committee on the Joint Committee.

Between Hare's two attempts to establish these committees (from 12th February 1947 to 31st October 1949) several important changes had taken place on the Housing Committee. On 12th March 1947 Mrs Evelyn Denington joined the Housing Committee. Denington was also on St. Pancras Borough Council's Housing Committee where she had worked with F. Gibberd on housing policy. Her interest in new ideas made her a rebel member on the Housing Committee who on occasions directly opposed Gibson. She was voted on as Vice Chairman at the meeting of the Housing Committee on 4th May 1949, which was a calculated move initiated by Isaac Hayward who had been Leader of the Council since 1947, when he had replaced Latham. Hayward was keen to bring about changes in the LCC housing policy and was sympathetic to the current criticisms of Gibson and Walker's work. He knew that with Denington as Vice Chairman of the Housing Committee and Fiske as Chairman of the Town Planning Committee, plus other Housing Committee members interested in changes, Gibson would be out-manoeuvred and voted against on further major policy issues.<sup>96</sup>

The other crucial change had been the appointment of Matthew<sup>97</sup> to Chief Architect to the Council in 1946. Thus a first rate 'modern' architect was already in the employ of the Council, biding his time for an anticipated reversal of policy on housing control.

(iii) The Lansbury "Live Architecture" exhibition. The development of the Lansbury neighbourhood area also illustrates the lack of confidence which the LCC had in Walker's architectural abilities in this period. At a meeting of the 26th January 1949<sup>98</sup> the Housing Committee were first notified of the Festival of Britain Council's interest in staging a "Live Architecture exhibition", as part of the 1951 Festival of Britain celebrations. They had before them a report from the Clerk of the Council<sup>99</sup> which outlined the main objectives of the Festival Committee. They had informed the LCC that they wanted:

a 'live' architecture exhibition to show a reconstruction scheme where the New London could be shown actually arising from the devastation and desolation due to the war and past absence of planning...The Festival Council hope that it will be possible to prepare a particularly interesting and original scheme in the way of a lay-out as a practical example of the application of the new planning conceptions and building technique.<sup>100</sup>

This brief that required a "particularly interesting and original scheme" was obviously one that the Housing Committee at this date would be unwilling to trust to the Director of Housing and Valuer. However it appears that this decision had already been anticipated by Hayward and his Clerk, since their report continued with the advice that private architects should be used for the "substantial part" of the work and that the Architect would be responsible, as the Council's Chief Planning Officer, for the preparation of a comprehensive lay-out plan. This therefore only left to the Director of Housing and Valuer a co-ordinating rôle.

Thus one of the most important LCC post-war housing projects, which was to form the focus of a national exhibition, was to be designed primarily by private architects and not the Council's own staff. The site chosen for this project was the area designated Neighbourhood 9 in the Stepney/Poplar reconstruction area. This site was renamed Lansbury and had been acquired by the LCC by compulsory purchase order in 1948. At 38 acres it was the ideal size for developing a complete neighbourhood unit. The Director of Housing and Valuer was put in charge of co-ordinating the scheme, and by May the site had been planned by the Town Planning Division of the Architects' Department and divided up into several smaller areas.<sup>101</sup> These areas were given to private architects; F. Gibberd, E. Armstrong, Bridgewater and Shephard, G.A. Jellicoe and G. Dawbarn and Partners (plate 99).

The only architectural work for which the Council itself was going to be responsible was the building of 3-and 6-storey blocks of flats on site no.1 (plates 100 and 101). The design of these flats was presented to the Housing Committee's newly formed "Housing and Town Planning joint development sub-committee", at their first meeting on the 14th November 1949<sup>102</sup> for discussion. Included with the report was a concurrent report from Matthew. He stated that;

the layout of Housing site no.1, for the construction of which the Director of Housing and Valuer is directly responsible, has been prepared in my department as part of the layout of the whole area. The proposals now submitted conform to this layout and the details and elevational treatment have been prepared in consultation with my officers. I therefore wish to concur with the report now submitted by the Director of Housing and Valuer".<sup>103</sup>

Matthew therefore suggested that he and his officers had been consulted on the design of these blocks. Compared to the Kingswood blocks they exhibited a considerably more consistent stylistic treatment. The

6-storey block was a simple rectangular slab with a flat roof and few details, except for the use of glass bricks for balcony fronts with the grid pattern being picked up for the detailing of the porch. Although not very progressive or exciting these blocks were a considerable improvement upon the rest of the design work coming out of Walker's Housing and Valuation Department. They are the only example of the kind of work that Matthew might have managed to produce if he had been in charge of housing at this period.

Matthew's report therefore states that his approval had been sought by the Council before letting the scheme go ahead. This signals the first sign of the return of the control of housing design back to the Architect, which was to be officially decided by the Housing Committee in the following month. The public nature of the Lansbury "Live Architecture" exhibition had therefore finally forced the Council to confront the issue of architectural content of its housing work and of the quality of design coming out of the Director of Housing and Valuer's department. Instead of being a major showpiece for the work of the LCC's housing team, the Lansbury "Live Architecture" exhibition gave public view to the work of private architects, especially the work of F. Gibberd. This was obviously a very galling situation for those interested in the private vs. public architect debate, who believed that it was the rôle of the public architect to design local authority housing. Therefore apart from the planning of the scheme (which was a straight implementation of the County of London Plan principles by A. Ling who was Chief Planning Officer in the Architects' Department) the Lansbury neighbourhood scheme did little for the prestige or image of the LCC.

Therefore, by the time that the ~~four~~ year trial period of having housing under Walker's control as Director of Housing and Valuer was due for review, there had been radical changes. Latham as Leader of the Council had been replaced by Hayward who was in favour of new ideas, Gibson resigned as Chairman on 26th April 1950, Denington had been made Vice Chairman, and Walker had come under criticism from the British architectural profession in the AJ debate on LCC Housing. The combination of these changes made the toppling of Gibson, Walker and their policies inevitable. The control of housing was therefore returned to the Architect to the Council on 2nd December 1949.<sup>104</sup>

This change was seen as a shift of policy from one with an emphasis placed upon output to one of high architectural quality and planning. The Times' leading article on 17th December observed, "architectural quality of the houses built has not kept pace with their quantity. The grim appearance of many new blocks of flats in central areas can partly be put down to the need to build as cheaply as possible, but not entirely"<sup>105</sup>. M. Wechsler (a Conservative member of the LCC) restated the non-party aspect of this debate: "Quality of design and layout has been greatly the concern of many of us at County Hall and following a resolution made by Conservative members a special sub-committee to deal with this important question is now set up".<sup>106</sup>

The older generation of Latham, Gibson and Walker with their housing policy and ideology firmly based and developed by their experience in the inter-war years (and ultimately relating to the rise of the Progressive Party and London Labour Party with its Fabian connections) had finally been forced out of power by younger, more progressive members of the LCC. The resolution of this debate on the rôle of architectural content and

quality of LCC housing work was critical for allowing contemporary ideas on planning and design (to be finally) introduced into the housing work of the LCC. This occurred five years after Forshaw had attempted but failed to do the same. The years 1946 to 1949 under Latham, Gibson and Walker's control, in fact marked a very restrictive period for new architectural and planning ideas: a period in which the LCC's housing work had fallen behind that of other more progressive authorities.



### 2.3. LCC HOUSING: THE MATTHEW/MARTIN PERIOD 1950-1956.

This section analyses the housing work of Matthew's new Housing Division, set up on the 1st January 1950, after the Council's decision of 2nd December 1949, to return the control of housing to the architect. By June 1950 the new housing division had been established with Matthew as Architect to the Council (up to his resignation on 1st May 1953), Martin as Deputy Architect (and Architect from 1st May 1953), Whitfield Lewis as Principal Housing Architect and Powell as Assistant Housing Architect. During the first six months it set about developing new policies and type plans. Before analysing the individual estates this section will follow the development of the general housing policy of the new division.

#### Policy Development 1950-1956

(1) The 14 Wandsworth sites. On the 8th November 1948 the Housing Committee<sup>1</sup> were presented by the Director of Housing and Valuer with a contour model of fourteen sites in the Wimbledon Common and Putney Heath area, which showed plans for the comprehensive redevelopment of sites within the entire area. These plans were accepted in principle by the Housing Committee who later instructed that these sites should be arranged with blocks of flats not exceeding the normal height of 5-storeys, and only in exceptional cases to use 6-storeys<sup>2</sup>. All the detailed plans for the original schemes of these sites<sup>3</sup> (many of which had been the grounds of Victorian and Edwardian Mansions and were exceptional in terms of their size, position and quality of mature landscaping) do not survive. It is however possible to gauge how Walker intended these sites to be developed by analysing schemes for three of these sites.

The first site to be purchased in this area after the war was the Roehampton Lane site, bought in December 1945. Its development was given to the private architects Stewart and Hendry FRIBA in May 1946. Their preliminary designs were not submitted to the Housing Committee by Walker until the plans for the comprehensive redevelopment of this area had been finalised. This scheme was therefore delayed until 1952,<sup>4</sup> when building work started. However, as built, this scheme called the Eastwood Estate, does represent the type of development that had been envisaged by Walker in the late 1940s. It attempted some form of mixed development. Even at a density of only 90 ppa., the site was too small (originally 6.5 acres, enlarged to 11.0 acres) to achieve much mix, especially as 5-storey blocks of flats were the main building type used<sup>(plate 102)</sup>. The scheme achieved 91% flats in 5-storey blocks and 9% houses in 2- and 3- (houses with flats over) storey blocks (plate 103). It was typical of Walker's in-county flattened development, and produced a dense and monotonous environment (plate 104).

The first site designed by Walker's staff was at Bessborough Road. The design for this estate was accepted by the Housing and Public Health Committee on the 12th February 1947.<sup>5</sup> This was to serve as a model for the other sites and again was a scheme that mainly utilised 5-storey blocks. The second scheme was the Wimbledon Parkside site, which was accepted by the Housing Committee on the 13th July 1949.<sup>6</sup> Details of this scheme survive in a report by Walker.<sup>7</sup> The site, like the Stewart and Hendry Scheme, utilised blocks of flats in 3- 4- 5- and 6-storeys. The 4- and 5-storey blocks outnumbered all other types, and only 34 houses were included. The density of the scheme at nearly 150 ppa was about 50% higher than recommended in the County of London Plan. The scheme was to be considered as a high quality development and higher

rents were to be charged. It included ten shops, a civic restaurant, forty three garages, and there were to be lifts in all blocks over 3-storeys in height. Walker also added in his report that "the Architect has been consulted and advises that the layout is such as can be recommended for approval from a town planning point of view".<sup>8</sup> The Town Planning Committee in a memo to the Housing Committee, had also approved in principle the comprehensive scheme of development of these sites.<sup>9</sup>

Therefore by July 1949, plans were quite well advanced to develop all fourteen sites in this area using Walker's 5-storey type development.<sup>10</sup> This would have covered practically all the site areas with a uniform building type. This development approach also meant that on these topographically exceptional sites, a large number of the trees would have to be felled and some areas of land flattened. The timing of the consideration of these plans was critical. They came at a period when the Housing Committee were already questioning the architectural competence of Walker.<sup>11</sup> These schemes like the Festival of Britain 'Live Architecture' exhibition debacle, acted as a major factor in assessing of the success of the four year trial period of housing under the control of as the Director of Housing and Valuer.

As already described, the Council and the Housing Committee decided to transfer control of housing to the Architect in December 1949. It was these fourteen sites in Wandsworth that formed the bulk of the work that was immediately taken away from Walker's staff. This was decided at a meeting of the Housing Committee on the 24th June 1950.<sup>12</sup> The committee had before them a report from the Clerk of the Council that stated:

The committee may wish to give special consideration to the sites fringing Wimbledon Common and Putney Heath. The Housing Committee in their report to the Council of 30th November 1948, referred to an

aggregate of 14 sites comprising about 305 acres for the provision of 6,000 houses and flats in this area. It was stated that their development presented an excellent opportunity for comprehensive planning. ...Eight [of the sites], Roehampton Lane (No.2), Wimbledon Parkside sites (No.2 and 3), Prince's Way, Albert Drive (Oaklea and Fernwood), Roehampton Park (Portsmouth Road and 'Clorensdean' and Alton Road) are to be undertaken by the Architect as the layouts have not yet been approved... The layouts for the remaining two sites (Putney Park Lane and Wimbledon Park Side No.1 site - total 1,901 dwellings) have been approved but they are included in the above list of schemes. In the case of Putney Park Lane, only a small amount of drawing work has been carried out...

It is for the Committee to consider and decide whether... there is an advantage in the architect handling the detailed development of these schemes, including their elevations, which may be in their view sufficient to outweigh a somewhat later date of commencement.<sup>13</sup>

It is clear that although the fourteen sites had been approved from a town planning point of view, the Housing Committee and the Council had decided that Walker's proposals for these sites were architecturally inadequate and failed to exploit the potential of these sites. The majority of these sites therefore became the first schemes for Matthew's new housing division to work on.

(ii) Mixed development redefined and the development of new building types. The regain of control of housing by Matthew allowed for a reappraisal of housing policy. The first outline of the new approach adopted by Matthew is seen in the proposals for the Prince's Way site. In this Matthew and his team stated:

A properly co-ordinated scheme of mixed development includes a proportion of houses. The planning problem, therefore, is to build at a higher density; to provide a proportion of houses, (both of which, of course, increase the area of site coverage) and at the same time preserve the open character of the development... The obvious solution is high blocks, but as this involves high costs a compensatory factor is necessary if the scheme is to be kept within economic limits. Houses will not assist this result as although they are cheaper to build than flats the subsidy is too low to give a satisfactory financial result. Two new types have, therefore, been evolved, high blocks with a minimum of site coverage and superimposed maisonettes giving better accommodation than that provided in flats but at a lower cost with the further advantage that they rank for the

flat subsidy.<sup>14</sup>

Matthew was therefore still following the County of London Plan's principle of mixed development and was extending its use by developing two new building types; the point block and the 4-storey superimposed maisonette block. The advantages of the new point block were given as: (1) small ground coverage, therefore possible to keep trees and are easy to site (2) high flats have views over Putney Heath (3) allowing architectural variety: "the monotonous effect of parallel rows of 5-storey blocks which would otherwise be necessary to achieve the same density can then be avoided" (4) and:

assuming that some higher blocks would be necessary in order to provide a degree of mixed development, it is found that although the cost per room rises up to 6- and 7-storeys, above that it tends to decrease owing to the economical re-use of shuttering, etc. The complete vertical standardisation of the point block enables full advantage to be taken of modern reinforced concrete technique.

Thus Matthew used architectural, technical, economic and planning arguments to justify this new type. The advantages of the superimposed maisonettes were seen to be: (1) larger rooms (2) privacy because the accommodation was on 2-storeys (3) better lighting as the access balcony was only in front of the kitchen level and (4) each maisonette had a separate garden.

Walker's concurrent report was far more guarded as to the desirability of high rise point blocks over the traditional 5-storey solution. He stated:

As the Committee are aware, the Council has so far not adopted any policy of providing blocks of a greater height than 6-storeys, but has authorised the construction of 8-storey blocks on one or two estates on the clear understanding that developments of this height were to be regarded as experiments which would not be extended until practical experience had been gained as to the tenants' reactions to

living in this type of block and of the management problems involved. In preparing schemes in my department any further use of high blocks has been excluded by the Council's policy.<sup>15</sup>

He continued with a critique of the high-rise blocks, outlining the following potential problems,

- (a) mothers with children don't like the upper storeys at Woodberry Down.
- (b) power cuts stop lifts,
- (c) upper floors are colder,
- (d) electric heating was expensive and not popular,
- (e) water storage needs pumps etc., and is therefore more expensive,
- (f) extra expense of cleaning staircase and windows,
- (g) cost to keep the greens and gardens,
- (h) use the new superimposed maisonettes, PM types, to make savings, therefore you don't need to use high blocks,
- (i) all flats in the point blocks are the same size: "The practice hitherto has been to provide a proportion of various sized flats in each block so as to integrate the family units rather than have all similar size families in one block".
- (j) should offer a choice of gas or electricity, but whatever, it will be more expensive to heat them.

He therefore picks out practical, maintenance, and running problems that high flats pose, and thus undermines the economic factors of Matthew's argument. The change in the Architect's Department policy was far more concerned with architectural and planning considerations rather than economic or maintenance ones. This was something Walker was aware of and tried to show in his report. The Comptroller also pointed out the greater expense of these new types, stating:

the Committee will appreciate that the erection of 11-storey blocks of the kind proposed is an experiment. Until experience has been gained of the problems of erection and maintenance and of the tenants' reactions it would be unwise to make more than a very limited use of this type.<sup>16</sup>

However the Housing Committee resolved to accept these two new types on 8th November 1950.<sup>17</sup> The Housing Management Sub-Committee also decided to visit Churchill Gardens, Pimlico (Westminster Borough Council) and the

Spa Green Estate, Rosebery Avenue (Finsbury Borough Council) to follow up Walker's criticism concerning the problems of maintenance and running of tall blocks of flats.<sup>18</sup>

Further discussion concerning Matthew's attitude to mixed development is seen in his report to the Sub-Committee of the Central Housing Advisory Committee which had asked the ICC to consider the 'experience and special requirements of families living in large blocks of flats'. He restated his main arguments for the Prince's Way type of mixed development, adding to this a discussion of the arrangement of flats for families of different sizes in relation to one another. He stated:

In my view the best way of providing a proper proportion of dwelling sizes is by planning a balanced form of mixed development over the site as a whole, and not necessarily in each individual block. It should be possible to plan a satisfactory mixture, both economically and sociologically, by distributing the different sized dwellings as follows:-

- (a) Large families with children in houses and maisonettes with their own gardens.
- (b) Medium sized families in staircase access blocks.
- (c) Small families in tall blocks and balcony access types.
- (d) Old persons in ground floor flats or bungalows freely spread over the scheme.

Segregation can be avoided by grouping the various types of accommodation around communal open spaces.<sup>19</sup>

Matthew therefore extended his definition of 'mixed development' beyond a merely architectural one to include a demographical one. This divides tenants into groups depending upon family size and relates each size to a particular building type. However no mention is made of mixed development encompassing the concepts of class or income.

Walker's concurrent report of the same title approaches the same issues from a different point of view. The draft of this report opened with:

it is necessary to remember one is building homes and that, generally speaking, the old idea of the village or communal settlement must be kept well to the forefront... bearing in mind also that one is dealing with human beings, my views are set out below.<sup>20</sup>

He continues by suggesting that balcony access type blocks encourage neighbourliness and that they can be "imagined as one street [where] the intermixing of the family strata tends to strengthen the habit of mutual help".<sup>21</sup> He develops this argument to criticise Matthew's segregation of family types, and continues:

the Council's practice, based on long experience and the experience gained in many other parts of the world, [is] to incorporate flats of various sizes ranging from one to five rooms in any one block... This policy tends to greater harmony amongst the tenants and a better community spirit.<sup>22</sup>

Walker's critique of both point blocks and to mixed development that segregated families according to their size went unheard. In the context of the early 1950s the new architectural experiments of mixed development offered by Matthew et al., despite their extra cost, were seen to be the new and modern way forward, and were taken up as policy by the Housing Committee.

The only real threat to the implementation of Matthew's mixed development approach was from the changing subsidy structures. A joint report from the Comptroller and Director of Housing and Valuer of June 1951, concerning the Housing Act 1949 subsidy provisions, summed up the situation:

Mixed development schemes: The act of 1946 included a special



arrangement to enable the Minister of Health in certain cases, to pay the same subsidy for houses as for flats in mixed development schemes. Since the passing of the 1949 Act houses and flats in mixed development schemes are treated separately and the Ministry have now decided that the total area of the site shall be allocated in the proportion of the number of habitable rooms provided in the flats and houses respectively. For that part of the site allocated for flats the subsidy will vary with the density but for the areas allocated for houses there is no such adjustment.

Conclusion:- Where cottages are provided as part of a mixed development the new subsidy operates generally less favourably than the provisions of the 1946 Act.<sup>23</sup>

It therefore became increasingly more expensive to build mixed development schemes.

(iii) Provision of Houses on In-County sites. As Walker's criticisms were made less effective due to the reduction of his political power (with the loss of his allies Latham and Gibson from the Council and Housing Committee) and prestige (after the criticism of his housing work and the return of Housing to the Architect), questioning of Matthew's new high-rise mixed development policy was left up to some of the Conservative members of the Housing Committee. The two prime movers in this were Lady Pepler<sup>24</sup> and N. Kenyon. They passed a resolution on the motion under standing order 84, in the full council on 31st July 1951, as to the erection of houses within the County. This produced reports from the Architect, Director of Housing and Valuer and Comptroller, which the Housing Committee considered and then resolved:

That the present position as regards the number of houses provided, or being provided, by the Council in the County of London since the War, the practical difficulties of increasing the proportion of houses to flats particularly in areas zoned for a residential development of not exceeding 100 ppa and the financial implications of the housing subsidy arrangements, be reported to the Council; and that the Architect and Director of Housing and Valuer do report whether houses at densities higher than 16 to the acre can be provided without detriment to present standards.<sup>25</sup>

This push, to question the high rise policy of the new Housing Division and to stimulate a search for additional solutions failed. The basic response was that more houses could not be provided due to the subsidy structure and also a lack of interest in this architecturally.

To try to raise interest in low rise alternatives, the builder J.W. Laing, a director of the firm John Laing and Son Ltd (one of the LCC's contractors) wrote to the Housing Committee shortly after Lady Pepler's abortive resolution. He offered to hold a competition for the design of a scheme for high density housing in London predominantly made up of houses. The first prize offered was 1,000 guineas. In his letter Laing stated how one of his employees had expressed his desire to live in a house rather than a flat. He suggests that the plight of the working classes had prompted his offer of a competition, but it must be conceded that he obviously had vested interests in such projects. Despite the rather awkward relationship of the LCC being offered help from a private builder, the Housing Committee agreed in principle to accept.<sup>26</sup> However, by February 1954 no definite proposals had been drawn up, there were problems over the choice of site and the regulations suggested by RIBA were not thought suitable. The Committee therefore finally abandoned the project<sup>27</sup> and with it any interest in high density, low rise development.

(iv) Tenants' Reactions to High-Blocks. Despite the proviso when accepting the Princes Way scheme in 1950 that it should be seen as an experiment until further evidence was gathered as to maintenance and living problems of high blocks, the Housing Committee were slow to investigate these issues. It was not until 1955, a few years after the Council's first high-rise blocks had been opened that the Committee resolved to ask "the Architect and the Director of Housing to report such

information as has been obtained by means of surveys or otherwise, as will enable the Committee to gauge the reactions to point blocks of the tenants living in them".<sup>28</sup> The gathering of this information by surveys was left up to Margaret Willis, a sociologist working in the Architects' Department. Willis described her job thus:

You might say I'm a sort of liaison officer between people like you, the housewives, and the council's technical men and women who make the plans in the drawing office. I'm sure you've often wished you had the opportunity to tell the architect a thing or two about the way your house has been planned. Perhaps you've even felt you'd very much like to make some suggestions for improving your neighbourhood. Well, it's my job to collect these criticisms and suggestions and I spend<sup>29</sup> a good deal of my time interviewing housewives in their homes.

One of her projects was to investigate the problem of high-rise flats:

These high blocks of flats that architects and planners are designing for the centre of our cities do save land but, you may ask, what about the people living in them. Do they like it and what are the advantages and disadvantages as they see them? This was a job for me...<sup>30</sup>

She outlines the advantages as magnificent views, healthy air and greater quiet, as against the disadvantages of the problems raised for families with children.<sup>31</sup> On the issue of private gardens one of her surveys showed that "housewives want to give washing a good blow in the garden, even in sooty London!" and "of course it is a hobby for the old man as it gives him something to do in the evenings instead of sitting cooped up indoors or spending money down at the pub". The 4-storey superimposed maisonettes were popular with the tenants due to the provision of private gardens and because "people prefer this type of building to a flat because they like going upstairs to bed".

Even allowing for the patronising attitudes expressed towards the Council's tenants, and the period sexist and classist bias, the scope and quality of Willis's surveys, as described in her radio talk and in her written reports,<sup>32</sup> were obviously very limited. The attempt by the Council to use tenant feedback to determine future policy was really only a token gesture. This kind of work did not significantly alter design decisions, and in any case came too late to be used to question the mixed development philosophy of Matthew's new department.

(v) New Flat types. Further flat type plans were developed by Matthew's new department to supplement the point block and superimposed maisonettes accepted in November 1950. These new type plans took into account:

post-war building experience, the progress of research in technique and methods, and modern trends in planning and design. Due regard is being given to the requirements of the Finance Committee that proposals for improvement in housing shall not involve increased costs, and also to the Minister of Health's statement in the Housing Manual 1949 that the long term housing problem calls for a greater variety of dwelling types in order to meet in a balanced way the varying requirements of the population as a whole.<sup>33</sup>

Four basic new types were submitted; balcony access flats (BA/B, plate 105), staircase access with a working kitchen (SA/A, plate 106), staircase access with a through living room (SA/B, plate 107), and staircase access with a dining kitchen (SA/C, plate 108).

The general considerations in drawing up such new types were that higher space standards should be provided as ICC flats were below the Ministry of Health recommendations. This was to be achieved by compact planning, reducing the 'circulation area', and by improvements in the basic structure by using a cross-wall structure. Also the aim was to avoid the use of rigid type plans and to use a "variety of different planning principles consistent with different ways of living each of

which may be used as the occasion demands".

These different planning principles were the introduction of flats with dining/kitchen and a living room (the SA/C), and flats with one large living area off the front door, with bedrooms off a rear lobby (the SA/B), which were to be added to the usual arrangement of flats with working kitchens and a dining/living room.

The report by Walker, the Director of Housing and Valuer,<sup>34</sup> was openly critical of these new internal arrangements:

they appear, however, to presuppose a willingness on the part of the tenant to adopt himself in many instances to a mode of living to which he is unaccustomed. Many of the type plans show a distinct trend towards continental practice with access to the kitchen obtained through the living room, no entrance halls, etc., which is a retrograde step and it may be considered that, leaving aside the merits of the innovations, the type plans depart rather too far from traditional English type of layout.

Despite these criticisms the plans were eventually passed after minor modifications.<sup>35</sup> Apart from suggesting new ways to use kitchen, dining, and living areas, these type plans were not markedly different from Forshaw's PS and PB types accepted in October 1945. They did however reflect the changing patterns of household and family behaviour, where the rôle of the housewife was changing and the leisure activities of the family were increasingly focused around the radio or television.<sup>36</sup>

(vi) Exhibition of Housing Schemes. In December 1953 the Housing Committee instructed the Architect to the Council, J.L. Martin, to arrange an exhibition for the inspection of the Committee of layout plans, elevations, and photographs of typical examples of schemes completed or designed since January 1950. This exhibition was held as a special meeting in January 1954.<sup>37</sup> In the Architect's report, Martin

stated:

one of the most important changes illustrated in the LCC schemes is the transition from ordinary block dwelling development towards a type of layout which can be described as mixed development and which includes 11-storey blocks of flats as well as maisonettes and houses. The beginnings of this development can be seen in the Ackroydon scheme. Later schemes e.g. Alton East Est, Loughborough Road, Alton West and Bentham Road, show that even at densities ranging from 100 to 136 ppa a number of families can be housed at ground level, and many can be provided with their own garden.

This type of development in which the architectural elements range from 2-storey buildings to 11-storey blocks, has many architectural advantages. It allows the human scale to be more easily maintained; it makes possible a much easier relationship to the surrounding development, which is often 2-storey in height; it opens up opportunities for considerable variety of layout and the maximum use of changes of level.

The report also emphasised the variety of type plans used and the use of standardised structures and components, such as low blocks with cross-wall construction, new wooden windows, and pre-fabricated panel walls for narrow maisonettes; all of which produced economies. Materials used were ones which weathered gracefully and needed little maintenance;

large areas of concrete or paint were avoided; brick is generally used as an external wall finish.... Roofs are flat or pitched according to the appropriate requirements of siting or material treatment. There is consequently a possibility of variety and range of architectural expression, but this must be achieved without detriment to the general principle of economic production.

The exhibition therefore served as a vehicle for Martin and the new Housing Division to promote the ideas of mixed development, which was legitimated by especially targeting the areas of 1) economy 2) maintenance 3) provision of as many houses and gardens in in-county areas as possible and 4) good architectural effects. These were all areas <sup>on</sup> which the criticism of Walker's housing work had focused. The period from January 1950 onwards was in this exhibition put forward as a period of radical change with major advances in the type and quality of the

Council's housing work. Martin therefore attempted to encourage the Housing Committee that its decision to return the control of housing to the architect had been completely vindicated.

(vii) In-county Higher Income Group Developments. As was seen in Matthew's definition of 'mixed' development, the issue of providing housing for the higher income groups for in-county development was initially considered. It was not until January 1952 that the Housing Committee looked at this issue. It was raised by a report by R. Stamp, the chairman of the Housing Committee,<sup>38</sup> in which he outlined the Council's attitude to higher income group houses within the county.

The Council's policy on Higher Income group houses applies to out-county estates only, and no such general authority exists for similar development inside the county. The Council has however, a number of higher rented flats in London but these have been approved as isolated cases in circumstances explained at the time.

These isolated cases included premises acquired for street improvement and destined for demolition, and property where the Council had taken over the leasehold interest where a company had failed to pay a loan. However a third category included:

new development to which the Council has already given its consent in principle or in detail, comprising Ruskin Park, Camberwell, where the first block of 3 is partly complete and let and a total of 240 flats is planned; and Hillside Gardens, Palace Road, Wandsworth, comprising a house already divided into 4 flats, together with 2 new blocks providing a further 28 flats; the Eyre Estate, Swiss Cottage, St. John's Wood, developed as part of a larger housing scheme (here 107 flats and houses of the Higher Income Group type are to be built as a condition of a settlement with the Eyre Estate for added acreage to be secured by agreement for some further 450 dwellings of normal development and for sites for education purposes).

No other schemes are for the time being contemplated. Recent Housing Acts invite Local Authorities to deal with 'general Housing' and not confine their activities to rehousing the 'working class'. Having regard, however to the great housing need as shown by our housing lists, which is mainly amongst that section of the community not in the Higher Income Group, and without wishing to anticipate the

Committee's decision, I would advance the suggestion that in London, apart from redevelopment areas under the T and CP Acts, the necessity to provide for mixed development is not so self-evident as it is in the out-county estates and that there is no need for the Council to change its present policy in this respect provided it is understood that the Committee should continue to consider the provision of Higher Income Group accommodation in London in any specific instance if there are exceptional circumstances which would justify a departure from the general rule... I am not confident of the Council's ability to do all this rehousing alone. Other agencies must take their part in this development.

Stamp therefore approached Eton and Dulwich Colleges, suggesting that they develop their own land for higher income groups and sell off other land to the Council for normal Council housing work. In the event of no agreement the Council would by compulsory purchase powers take land for their own development. Thus a symbiotic relationship was envisaged between private landowners and the LCC, developing areas between them for both council tenants and higher income groups. It was resolved by the Housing Committee to follow Stamp's suggestions.<sup>39</sup> However, after consultation with Eton and Dulwich Colleges, no such development took place.

The Eyre Estate development mentioned by Stamp in his report, was the only in-county estate where a mix of income groups was planned. The Council had had this plan forced upon them by the Eyre Estate, who on selling the Council land on the west and east side of the Finchley Road had insisted that out of the 13.2 acres for housing, the smaller east section of 3.41 acres be developed to meet the needs of the higher income groups. They also specified that their own architect, Louis de Soissons, be in charge of the scheme. The plans for this eastern section were first put to the Council in July 1951 but were revised several times to reduce cost. The final layout for both sites was accepted on February 1954.<sup>40</sup>



The western site for ordinary council tenants consisted of 12 semi-detached houses, 250 maisonettes and 79 flats in a total of 15 blocks ranging from 3- to 9-storeys. The eastern Site for the higher income groups consisted of seven 3-storey terrace houses and 100 staircase access flats in two 9-storey blocks (plates 109 and 110). In both definitions of 'mixed' development, this in-county scheme failed. Socially the mix was made physically separate by the Finchley Road dividing the development into two distinct areas, and architecturally seven 3-storey terraced houses placed against two 9-storey blocks of flats offered little variety. The Council were unwilling to be involved in the running of the eastern Higher Income Group development, named Boydell Court, and when built leased these dwellings to Odderino's Hotel and Rest Company, who took charge of the properties, adding heating and better facilities and managing it as a private estate.

The LCC therefore had no commitment to developing in-county estates for mixed income groups. Even on its very large comprehensive redevelopment sites it failed to attempt any kind of social mixing. By the time Matthew had regained control of housing, the concept of Local Authorities providing housing for all sections of the community was becoming an out of date ideal, replaced in 1951 by Macmillan's policy, of "Homes for the People", and the return of the private builder producing houses for sale to the higher income groups or middle classes.<sup>41</sup> Thus in May 1955 the Housing Committee resolved that:

as a temporary measure pending further consideration of the general question of providing higher income group houses [both in-county and out-county] the Architect to arrange wherever possible that no further houses for this group are constructed.<sup>42</sup>

The "new social experiment in municipal housing"<sup>43</sup> had come to an end,

with little success either on out-county or in-county developments.

#### Analysis of individual schemes.

This section analyses six of the most important schemes (as regards planning and aesthetic changes) developed between 1950 to 1956. It does not aim to give detailed descriptions of these estates since all these schemes are well documented and discussed in journals. The work of Matthew's new department was publicised from the start,<sup>44</sup> and critical appraisals of the schemes soon followed.<sup>45</sup> What will be attempted<sup>46</sup> is an analysis of the sociological, political and aesthetic implications of the designs and, as far as is possible, to relate these to specific ideological concerns of different design teams working within the Housing Department. Some work in this area has already been attempted. R.S. Haynes, M.Phil Thesis 'Design and Image in English Urban Housing 1945-57'<sup>47</sup> makes a start, and looks at Ackroydon, and Alton East and West estates. This section will therefore add to the rather limited scope of Haynes' research, and after a brief initial analysis of the schemes, relate these to the theoretical debates and definitions of the<sup>three</sup> <sub>A</sub> paradigms, as discussed in Section 1.1.

(1) Prince's Way, Ackroydon Estate.<sup>48</sup> Prince's Way was the first scheme tackled by Matthew's Housing Division. Plans were accepted for this site by the Housing Committee on 8th November 1950.<sup>49</sup> The arguments for using point-blocks on this exceptional site to provide a mixed development have already been discussed.

In 1950 Colin Lucas was in charge of the Research and Development Group, and his first job had been to develop designs for a point block and new 4-storey superimposed maisonettes. His design for an 11-storey,

100ft+ point block provided three flats per floor. The T-shaped plan put each flat in a separate wing with windows on three sides, giving a wide range of aspect and maximum daylighting and sun penetration<sup>50</sup> (plate 111). At the junction of the wings was a central 'core' comprising two lifts, main and escape staircases opening onto a balcony landing. The flats all contained two bedrooms with a kitchen with a glazed screen looking through to a living room with dining area, and further to the balcony. These flats were therefore aimed at small families with either no children or very young children. The design and detailing carried out by Lucas is in a sophisticated International style aesthetic. The blocks were originally to have been faced in white painted concrete, as seen in the photographs of model (plate 112).<sup>51</sup> This concrete facing was to be made up of "concrete panels with a vertically fluted finish produced in situ from special shuttering".<sup>52</sup> The long end of the T-facade had a central section of ribbon windows alternating with a white concrete facing panel (plate 113). At either end glass fronted balconies were cantilevered out and appeared to hover. These elements were outlined and defined by the concrete end walls and flat roof line. The entrance to the point block (plate 114) also exhibited International style detailing, the cantilevered canopy over the entrance, and the exposed pillars at the end of the short side of the block. The latter attempts to suggest the weight of the block is lifted off the ground by three slender pillars. However this effect is reduced as the ground floor area had to be used for storage (due to the need for an economic use of all available space), although this is overcome to some degree by the use of black bricks which visually help make the lower walls recede.

The lower blocks were of a cross-wall structure which allowed the non-weightbearing façades to be filled in with large window and panelled

areas (plate 115). The resulting effect of using this type of structure is both one of lightness and repetition, as the windows, panels, and balconies are handled in a rigorous geometric manner which exaggerate the blocks subdivision into equal units. In the design and detailing of the new blocks the reference was quite clearly to the International style in which Lucas had been working from about 1932.

In the building of the point blocks, Lucas's use of white concrete facing was abandoned for brick. This minimised the effect of size and contrast to the surrounding trees and buildings, and made the point blocks relate more closely to the brick, cross-wall constructed, lower blocks.

However the team put in charge of this development (under the architect in charge, H.G. Gillett) included Cleeve Barr, E. Moholi, A.P. Roach and J. Partridge.<sup>53</sup> This introduced architects, especially Barr, who had a different attitude to design from Lucas. Therefore in the planning of the scheme, Lucas' interest in International style aesthetics is replaced by the 'Swedish boys',<sup>54</sup> concern for developing a "people's architecture", derived from Swedish examples. Their final layout for the scheme<sup>55</sup> followed:

a complete survey of the site including the position, size and condition of all trees, landscape and garden features... so that planning and preservation could go hand in hand towards a result where the amenities created by the well-established landscape of previous generations could be made available to the new inhabitants. It is desirable that as many people as possible should enjoy these amenities.<sup>56</sup>

The layout (plates 116 and 117) placed the four 11-storey point blocks used on the scheme in four separate areas "to complete an even disposition over the whole area",<sup>57</sup> The remaining blocks were grouped

around a series of:

related 'greens', each of domestic scale, linked by roads and paths to give interesting and varied spatial effects. Contrast is provided by the occasional glimpse of a 'point' block rising amongst the trees. A loop road off Prince's Way gives access to a group of 8 shops. A paved forecourt creates a small shopping 'precinct'... As well as the general estate roads there is a footpath system linking the shopping centre via the Ackroydon sunken garden and rockery walk, past a high block<sup>58</sup> and across Victoria Drive to the Paxton garden and Lake of Fairlawn.

Therefore in the general layout great care was taken to exploit the sites natural amenities in such a way as to provide an environment that maintained a 'human' scale and to promote an even social mix and interaction. The four point blocks were isolated from each other and surrounded by trees to minimize the impact of their scale (apart from the occasional glimpse of them through trees (plate 118)). Emphasis was laid upon pedestrian movement through the amenities, now made available for all to enjoy, and of social circulation between dwellings and the public facilities and shops (plates 119 and 120). By grouping the different building types closely together around 'greens', an architectural and social mix was achieved (plate 121). This mix was limited though, as at a density of 96 ppa, only 3.7% of the dwellings were terraced houses, and 22% as superimposed maisonettes. Thus nearly 26% of the dwellings at Ackroyden were for larger families, and had private gardens.

The Ackroydon Estate was therefore the result of two design approaches, Lucas' International style aesthetic interests and the development team's concern to develop a 'people's architecture'. In the final scheme this compromise produced a rather uneasy result.

(11) Highbury Quadrant Estate, Islington<sup>59</sup> The Highbury Quadrant site, acquired in 1951, was another site formed from the grounds of large

detached Victorian properties, and had over 1000 mature trees. The solution chosen for this site (and accepted by the Housing Committee on 27th February 1952), was not to use high point blocks to allow for a mixed development, but to develop and modify the traditional 5-storey block (plates 122 and 123).

In order to retain the maximum number of trees in this well wooded site and at the same time afford views over Clissold Park from many parts of the site, the extensive use of conventional 'slab' blocks of flats has been avoided by the combination of approved balcony and staircase types of flats in compact five-storey T-shaped blocks... The Southern portion of the site... is developed formally by the use of open courts bounded by terrace houses and three storey flats. The more difficult levels and shapes of the central area have been dealt with by a more informal arrangement of these 5-storey blocks... The Northern section contains maisonettes which have been linked together to present a continuous <sup>60</sup>façade in conformity with the existing terraces of houses adjoining.

Architecturally the scheme is not as sophisticated as the detailing and design of the Ackroydon 'point' blocks. The 5-storey blocks are cut-off versions of the Ackroydon point blocks (plate 124) with similar details, but a less successful long façade. This long façade expresses the three flats per floor rather than two as at Ackroydon, and lacks the symmetry and control of the Ackroydon blocks (plate 125).

Rather, the main object of the Quadrant scheme, designed by K. Easton (Architect in Charge), H.R.E. Knight, E.J. Stevenson, B.L. Adams, E.R. Hayes, A.J.G. Booth and V.A. Liff,<sup>61</sup> was:

that of creating a local community, conscious of itself but not severed from its surrounding... and whatever detailed criticisms may be levelled against the architecture of the scheme, this constitutes <sup>62</sup>a worthwhile achievement.

This emphasis upon community and environment rather than architectural virtuosity, was typical of the 'Swedish' approach.

In redeveloping this area every attempt was made to preserve the clearly defined local community by creating an effective environmental substitute:

The demands of economy, density and orientation must be met, but the result, nevertheless, need not be a series of new blocks staring out blankly from the areas of decay they replace.

How may a sense of locality or community be achieved? Many elements contribute - the handling of scale and space, the breaking down of the area into recognizable parts and, above all, sympathy to the site. This means absorbing the local pattern<sup>63</sup>, exploiting any local features and rejecting the easy or spectacular.

At the Quadrant Estate this was achieved by restricting the higher 5-storey blocks to the central area of the site, amongst the trees, and locating the 2-storey terraced housing and the 4-storey maisonettes and 3-storey flats to the periphery of the site where they joined and integrated with the pre-existing 2- and 3-storey 19th-century housing. These lower blocks also used pitched roofs and brick, which also helped them merge into the existing environment. The description continued:

The disposition of living accommodation does not necessarily create a community. Additional buildings, clubrooms, shops and pubs are essential components and all these are located at focal points in the scheme (plate 126).

The clubroom is the social centre of the Tenants' Association, with whom the architect has co-operated as fully as possible. The Association's response was enthusiastic, though at times critical, and a number of modifications and improvements resulted from their suggestions. A mural was designed for the clubroom by a member of the architectural team and was painted by this group in their spare time, a gesture well received (plate 127).

The play facilities and ball games are well patronized and play is permitted on the central grassed areas. These, being of considerable area and within parental view, do not seem to have suffered unduly.<sup>64</sup>

Architecture and planning are therefore used to serve the community rather than to be spectacular or formal. Detailing of the terraced

houses and lower blocks is very 'domestic', with pitched roofs and the use of brick and wood (plate 128). Attention is given to the creation of spaces for public interaction, as for example the seating under the linking 2-storey blocks of flats (plate 129). This area is also decoratively tiled to produce a less austere environment.

The Quadrant estate (despite the elements of International Style details of the 5-storey T-shaped blocks, which as at Ackroydon were faced in brick and so relate materially to the rest of the scheme) is an example of an humanist approach to architecture which emphasised the human scale of the environment (plate 130). It also offered a revised 5-storey block layout as an alternative to the mixed development approach that used 11-storey point-blocks.

(111) Portsmouth Road, Alton East Estate.<sup>65</sup> The housing committee resolved to accept the plans for the development of the Portsmouth Road site on 17th October 1951<sup>66</sup>. The joint report by the Architect to the Council, the Director of Housing and Valuer and the Chief Engineer outlined the main feature of the plan (plate 131):

As a result of further development and research it has now been possible to evolve a more economical point block. It is therefore, possible to increase the proportion of these blocks at Portsmouth Road, where they may be used to advantage both to achieve reduced site coverage and to give greater flexibility and openness in layout. With the exception of a small block of 1-room dwellings, it has been found possible also to avoid the use of both balcony access and staircase blocks and to accommodate all four-room and five-room dwellings in either 4-storey maisonettes or 2-storey terrace houses. That is to say, all the larger families, requiring 3 or more bedrooms, will be accommodated in houses or maisonettes. ...To maintain architectural scale with the existing development the 2-storey terrace houses have been sited along the Bessborough Road frontage and on 'Clarensdean', the detached corner of the site next to Roehampton village... The maisonettes have been arranged in the main between the areas of terrace housing and the point blocks, so that there is a gradual build-up of architectural scale from the low to the tall buildings, at the same time giving good prospects from most blocks and pleasant vistas through the site across the well



landscaped open spaces.<sup>67</sup> (plate 132)

The development of the Portsmouth Road site was therefore seen as a further development of the mixed development concept, which managed by the use of the new four flats per floor point blocks (plate 133) to achieve 40% of dwellings as either terraced housing or 4-storey maisonettes (plate 134) (all with their own gardens) and 60% of dwellings in 11-storey point blocks. This was a considerable advance upon Ackroydon where only 26% of dwellings were houses or maisonettes.

The design team for the Portsmouth Road development were R. Stjernstedt (Architect in Charge), and Assistant Architects, A.W.C. Barr, O.J. Cox, A.R. Garrod, J. Partridge, B. Adams, H. Graversen, P. Nevill. R. Stjernstedt, C. Barr, A. Garrod and O. Cox gave a lecture on the scheme in 1952.<sup>68</sup> When asked about the design of the layout they replied that:

It took about half a dozen architects, on and off, about three months. In this time many alternative schemes were put forward, including some with quite formal squares. In the end the determining factor was the character of the sloping site with its big trees. This explains the informal, rather romantic grouping of the buildings and the road pattern... The scheme started off with about eight architects in the group. This was perhaps a bit too many to start with and quite a few red herrings were pursued. A number of different building types were investigated and alternative plans considered. There were some fierce arguments about the merits of the different proposals. It is true to say that the final recommendations of the group were democratic<sup>69</sup> and everyone made some positive creature contribution to the scheme.

The final scheme was therefore a collaborative design, but especially represented the ideas of Stjernstedt, Barr and Cox. The main elements of the design to note are its lack of monumentality, and its tendency to create a 'cosy' intimate environment (plate 135). Pitched roofs were used, except for the point blocks, and traditional materials

of brick and wood. The dwelling unit as an individually identifiable element within the whole scheme was suggested in several ways. Cox's design of the point block stressed the:

irregular out line of the plan, and the 'handling' of the two bedroom units gave expression on the elevation of the individual flats. Here again, the design differed from Continental point blocks. There is no symmetry, and the rhythm of projection and recessive plane goes continually round the block.<sup>70</sup> (plates 136 and 137)

Thus the treatment of the facades of the point blocks, with the partly recessed private balconies for each flat, were seen as one way in which individuality could be suggested.

Another way was by the use of colour and decoration:

To provide points of interest and to accent visually certain individual buildings, some of the rows of terrace houses... are painted externally in bright colours. A range of dark greens and light blues and greys has been chosen to harmonize with each other and with the red facing-brick of which the houses are built. The ground-floor walls of the point blocks are also picked out in strong colour - a different one for each block. The same colour is also used internally on the walls of the lift to give an individual identity to each block.<sup>71</sup> (plates 138 and 139)

and

a different colour and tile pattern was used on the entrance floor to help distinguish one block from another, and the staircase wall itself was originally painted with a triangular pattern following the slope of the staircase.<sup>72</sup> (plates 140 and 141)

The use of special bonding of the brickwork of the gable ends of the maisonette blocks<sup>(plates 142 and 143)</sup> has been "consciously inspired by similar loving detailing on the old LCC Roehampton Estate nearby"<sup>73</sup> (plates 144 and 145). This cottage estate, opened in 1921, represented an earlier attempt at state housing on a human and domestic scale. This garden suburb tradition was one much admired by the 'New Humanist' group of

architects,<sup>74</sup> and the use of brick bonding patterns, copied from the old Roehampton Cottage Estate, was one of the few details that could be re-used without entailing extra cost. Another example of the use of this brick bonding pattern was at the nearby Ashburton Estate which was designed and built at the same time as Alton East. Here the brick patterning was even more obvious and sophisticated, and was used on the 2-storey block window panels (plates 146 and 147) and on the 6-storey block entrance walls (plate 148). The informal grouping and staggering of the rows of terrace housing, creating a picturesque quality (plate 149), was another feature that was similarly employed. The whole scheme's aesthetic interest was summed up by Cox as:

The 'Portsmouth Road group' were strongly influenced by the turn-of-the-century English housing tradition and its recent reinterpretation during the war years in Sweden. (The word 'point-block',<sup>75</sup> coined by them is a literal translation of the Swedish 'punkthus').

The Portsmouth Road development therefore represented a more consistent application of both New Empiricist and New Humanist interests (both in terms of design and planning) compared to Ackroydon. It, more than any other estate, illustrates the architectural aims of these two groupings working in the new Housing Division.

(iv) Loughborough Road.<sup>76</sup> The development plans for the Loughborough Road site were accepted by the Housing Committee on 2nd July 1952<sup>77</sup> (plate 150). The joint report by the Architect and the Director of Housing and Valuer stated that the design considerations for the scheme were:

An attempt has been made in this scheme to provide in a site zoned at 38 dwellings<sup>per</sup> acre [136 ppa], a reasonable proportion of houses and maisonettes with garden. To do this the use of tall blocks has been found to be essential. Nine 11-storey blocks have been incorporated

in the scheme to accommodate the majority of the smaller families (in 1, 2 and 3 room dwellings).<sup>78</sup>

This further development of mixed development principles, by the use of 11-storey slab blocks, produced 61% in 11-storey blocks and 39% in 4-storey maisonettes and 2-storey terrace houses. As part of the development of the 11-storey blocks, a new type was developed which utilized a narrow frontage (15' 2") maisonette, the MA3L (plate 151). This was said to provide better accommodation than the BA. 3 room flats as (1) it gave more privacy and quiet and was more like a house (2) it was economic to construct and (3) the narrow frontage meant that no bedroom was overlooked by the access balcony.

The design team for Loughborough Road were C. Lucas and C.G. Weald (Architects in Charge), and architects H.J. Hall, G.M. Sarson, E.J. Voisey, S.J. Howard, A.A. Baker, C.A. St John Wilson, P.J. Carter and A.H. Colquhoun.

The aesthetic influence for the whole scheme (plate 152) as well as the new 11-storey maisonette slab blocks was quite obviously Corbusian. The aesthetic and architectural interests of the group can be seen in C.A. St John Wilson's article in The Observer, where he stated that the most urgent architectural problem was that of large scale housing. This uniquely 'modern' problem of the last 35 years, he said, was dealt with by the theory:

of the Modern Movement which alone has attempted to tackle present day living conditions on their own terms. During the last 100 years the chaos and maladjustment of the industrial and machine age have nearly obliterated any memory of the possible healthiness and joy of living in a city; the two results of despair we know only too well - the ruthlessness of the 'Georgian' barracks and the escapism of the coy 'garden-city'. It is therefore valuable to draw attention to some examples in post-war housing which have attempted to provide a solution combining honesty, enjoyment and self-confidence.<sup>79</sup>

He then describes Finsbury Borough Council's Priory Green Estate, Busaco Street (1937-51) 8-storey blocks and Westminster Borough Council's Churchill Garden Estate (1946-51) 9-storey blocks and concludes:

Aesthetically the expression of the two schemes discussed is very different. But between them they demonstrate elements of the one tendency that can hope to resolve the inner disintegration of our cities because it goes out wholeheartedly to meet both the machine and the modern tempo of living on their own terms, assimilating and broadening that emotional equilibrium regained for us by the pioneer artists of the last 50 years.

Wilson's espousal of a Modern Movement belief in machine age aesthetics and a new modern life style stated in Corbusian rhetoric also restates Le Corbusier's belief in architectural determinism.<sup>80</sup> The Loughborough Road scheme was the first LCC development in which architects in the new housing division attempted to construct a Corbusian 'ville radieuse'; the 11-storey maisonette slab blocks inspired by the Unité d'Habitation in Marseilles (compare plates 153 and 154).

The narrow fronted maisonette slab block was developed further for the Bentham Road scheme:

In preparing a layout for the Bentham Road site, the levels of which present very special difficulties, a new type of narrow fronted maisonette in 11-storey blocks has been designed. The new design has a 12ft frontage and can be built in combination of 2 and 4 room maisonettes. The narrow frontage has a greater depth than is usual and it is proposed that bathrooms and W.C.'s shall be located centrally and artificially ventilated. Advantages are that the simple plan gives greater flexibility of arrangement, the reduction in external walling and finishes give greater economy in structure and better thermal insulation and the concentration<sup>81</sup> of bathroom, kitchen and W.C. allows centralization of services.

The Housing Committee resolved that before accepting the plans for Bentham Road, a mock-up of a narrow fronted maisonette be built and tenants' reactions to it assessed. The mock-up was built on the Ashburton Estate site (plate 155) and tenants of the Argyle estate were asked to

visit it and make suggestions. The report by the Architect and Director of Housing and Valuer<sup>82</sup> however stated that only 15 tenants bothered to visit the mock-up, fourteen women and one man. Their few suggestions (concerning minor internal design details) were considered and the designs slightly modified. The Bentham Road scheme plans and the design of the new narrow fronted maisonette MA.B3 (plate 156) were approved and passed by the Housing Committee in March 1953.<sup>83</sup>

These two 11-storey maisonette slab blocks, the MA.3L and the MA.B3, although inspired by Le Corbusier's Unité d'Habitation in Marseille are very far removed from the sophistication of the internal planning and arrangements of the Unité block (plate 157). Despite formal similarities of facade treatment, the general effect of raising large slab blocks up a pilotis and set in parkland, the use of 'beton brut' surface finishes and the use of deep narrow fronted flat plans (compare plates 156 and 158), the LCC maisonette blocks made no attempt to be complete vertical garden cities. They were merely high-density balcony access slab blocks, with very simple internal flat plans. Wilson in the above mentioned article, had complained of the restrictions imposed on British designers by the prevailing bye-laws and Housing Acts:

Blocks already constructed derive from the first post-war phase of planning when attempts to alter existing by-laws, height restrictions and conventional plan-forms would not have been feasible. The next phase should be an attempt to change precisely these basic data. Solutions which naturally arise from the new conditions are invariably frustrated by out-of-date laws or conventions; the height of blocks, the relationship between private and public open space, the proportion of communal facilities to dwellings and above all, the actual plan form of the dwellings themselves all need reconsideration at an administrative level.<sup>84</sup>

Loughborough Road and later Bentham Road, schemes can therefore be seen as a rather restricted and frustrated attempt at translating Modern

Movement ideas directly into LCC housing design by this team of architects. The Loughborough Road development was the direct precursor to the Roehampton Lane scheme.

(v) Roehampton Lane site<sup>85</sup>. The development plans for the Roehampton Lane site (later called Alton West) were accepted in principle by the Housing Committee in June 1952, and the final detailed plans by September 1953.<sup>86</sup> The joint report by the Architect and the Director of Housing and Valuer outlined the planning approach for the site:

The site is more varied and in certain areas much bigger in scale than the Portsmouth Road site which adjoins it. Certain parts of the site are eminently suitable for 11-storey point blocks similar to those on the Portsmouth Road site, and these have been grouped in two areas.

The big open field below Downshire House requires a somewhat different treatment, more in keeping with the magnificent scale and parkland character of this portion of the site. Five 11-storey maisonette blocks (similar to those designed for the Bentham Road development) have been sited along the top of this field. After discussions with the Ministry of Housing and Local Government the siting of these blocks has been arranged so that they present the minimum effect of mass when viewed from Richmond Park... The remainder of the housing accommodation is confined to 4-storey maisonettes, 2- and 3-storey houses and single dwellings.(plate 159)

Roehampton Lane site was therefore a reworking of the mixed development approach as used at Loughborough Road. This scheme, though, at a lower density and on an exceptional site, encouraged a more sophisticated approach. The cost of this concerned the Finance Committee who in a memo stated that they felt the high cost of the development:

is not warranted in view of the nature of the development and consider that a much more satisfactory financial result should be achieved, noting that the Housing Committee will be considering the possibility of higher rents with this end in view, pointing out that part of the estate is designed to attract tenants from the middle income groups.<sup>87</sup>

Thus the greater expense of this development was in part to be offset by

higher rents; letting the 11-storey point block flats to middle income groups.

The resulting social mix of the Roehampton scheme was considerably different from the Ackroydon and Portsmouth Road schemes. These had attempted the mixing of size of dwelling (and hence family size and type) by the mixing of dwelling types around greens and squares within the site. In contrast at Roehampton the building types were deployed in distinct groups. The 11-storey point blocks were positioned in two clumps in the northern section along with the large area of parkland with the five 11-storey slab blocks. Thus all the smaller family dwellings were located in the northern section, and the larger four and five room dwellings for larger families were in the Southern section in 2- and 3-storey housing and 4-storey maisonettes. Also the higher rents of the point blocks meant some segregation of income groups within the estate.

The design team for the Roehampton site were C. Lucas as Architect in Charge and architects; J.A. Partridge, W.G. Howell, J.A.W. Killick, S.F. Amis, J.R. Galley and R. Stout. The interests of this group in Le Corbusier's Unité, are described in a discussion printed in the AR in 1951<sup>88</sup>. This was a talk given by LCC Housing division architects who had visited the Unité in Marseille. This group included W. Howell of the Roehampton design team. Howell's talk picked out

(1) the need to see the Unité not as an isolated building type, but as part of a larger plan. He cited Le Corbusier's plan for St. Dié;

The post-war project by Corbusier for rebuilding a small town in the Vosges represents the most recent development of his ideas on urbanism. In the plan, Corbusier shows eight Unités, closely related to broad pedestrian ways leading into and through a series of 'piazzas'.... The eight Unités form a series of vertical streets within a few minutes walk of the town centre and are set in a landscaped park... Then, from this highly concentrated centre, long



ribbons of low houses run-out into the countryside along parkways... These two, the vertical street related to the piazza and the horizontal street radiating into the countryside, are clearly differentiated in the plan, each an imaginative interpretation of a particular way of living.<sup>89</sup> (plate 160)

(2) The use of the Modulor scale:

the idea of a whole structure, a whole set of components, a whole series of spaces, designed on a system of dimensions all harmoniously related, and all related to the human figure. Everyone who has seen the building testifies to the human and domestic quality of the building... To what extent the quality of the building derives from the use of such a geometrical system, or to what extent it is a result of the handling of such a system by a very great artist, we might discuss.<sup>90</sup>

(3) The development of a deep, narrow fronted flat:

The saving in external walling, maintenance costs and heating must be enormous, and if you want to know just how exciting and generous an interior of these proportions can be, I can only advise you to go to Marseilles.<sup>91</sup>

These three points practically form the precise brief for the Roehampton development. The grouping of the 11-storey slab blocks in parkland and the arrangement of terrace housing and 4-storey maisonettes along long straight roads echoes exactly Howell's description of Le Corbusier's St. Dié plan (compare 160 and 161). The design team also used the modulor, or at least an anglicised version of it for all the detailing and layout dimensions.<sup>92</sup> Partridge describes their efforts thus:

We evolved for this scheme a dimensional system aimed at creating a scale reference for all the buildings in this mixed development. This was our own anglicised form of Le Corbusier's Modulor based on the Fibonacci series of numbers and related to scales in feet and inches. This dimensional system meant that most proportions became either golden sections or squares, or more complex arrangements<sup>93</sup> of those two basic shapes. Thus we were disciples of Le Corbusier,

The general desire to design according to absolute rules and values, to restore a geometric basis for architecture was also part of the Modulor aesthetic. The discussion after the talks by those architects who had visited the Unité was written up in the article under 'aesthetics' in the following way:

The use of the Modulor has not only ensured the absolute relation of parts to the whole but in so far as the starting-point of its geometrical progressions is that of a typical 6 foot human figure, these relations are not abstract but inherently human; 'a whole structure, a whole set of components, a whole series of spaces designed on a system of dimensions all harmonically related'. (Howell) It is particularly important that the real effect of this geometry as well as its practicability and lack of mumbo-jumbo should be stressed. In England lack of geometry during the last 100 years (Regency architecture still lived on the residue of eighteenth century geometry) has given license to that wholesale reliance upon 'intuition' and 'individual taste' that contributes so much to the confusion of the day. The Unité is an outstanding vindication of the Modulor both on aesthetic grounds and on the practical coherence it gives to the ordering and relating of prefabricated elements.<sup>94</sup>

This geometric element is seen not only in the overall layout design but also in the façade treatment of the buildings. The point blocks, based upon the Portsmouth Road types, achieve quite a different effect. Instead of the individuality of the four units being expressed in the plan and facade, the Roehampton blocks are kept to a rigid rectangular outline (plates 162 and 163). The two larger façades are symmetrical but for the two shorter ones symmetry was not possible due to the window positions (however the division of the façades into modulor elements is clearly stated).

The premises for the design and layout of the Roehampton site are therefore directly borrowed from Le Corbusier.

(vi) Brookland Park Estate,<sup>95</sup> The first plans for the Brooklands Park site, Greenwich, acquired in May 1951, were accepted by the Housing

Committee in October 1953.<sup>96</sup> These plans proposed the use of a new building type, a 5-storey point-block, the PF/C (plate 164), which was basically a truncated version of the Portsmouth Road 11-storey point-block (plate 165). This was used at Brooklands Park in combination with 2-storey terraced housing to produce a low rise mixed development at a density zoned for 70 ppa. The scheme was publically opposed by local residents due to its proximity to the residential area of Blackheath. The Minister decided in March 1954 to ask for some revisions, these included the frontage to Brooklands Park, to be developed with twelve higher income group houses and the central area to be more densely developed with seven 5-storey blocks (plate 166). R. Stjernstedt was the architect in charge for this scheme.<sup>97</sup>

The detailing and lay-out of this low density mixed development scheme were similar to the Quadrant estate. Pitched roofs were used on all building types including the 5-storey point blocks. This helped the 5-storey blocks to visually relate more closely to the 2-storey terrace housing. It also broke up the regular rectangular outline of the blocks, especially as the central area of the roof was higher which created a very lively skyline. Therefore at points where the 5-storey point-blocks adjoined 2-storey housing (plate 167) an architectural contrast was avoided. The pitched roof also acted as a visual signifier for the concept of 'home', and the varied asymmetrical façades of the point blocks also suggested individuality. The domestic and intimate qualities of the scheme were also carried through to the detailing of the buildings. The terrace housing built with traditional materials was placed around greens, and linked by paths (plate 168). The small front gardens were delineated by low metal railings so that the junction between private and public space was discretely made. The estate therefore emphasised

communal interaction. Dramatic architectural effects were avoided altogether.

This scheme, and the similar Forest estate, Lewisham,<sup>98</sup> developed at the same time on a wooded sloping site (plates 169 and 170) are examples of the 'Swedish' approach to housing, with an emphasis upon intimacy, informality, no monumental or spectacular architectural effects, simple decorative detailing and an attempt to suggest individuality of the dwellings by siting and façade treatment. The planning and architectural qualities of these two estates are remarkably close to their Swedish prototypes (plates 171, 172 and 173). This is not surprising as Stjernstedt (architect in charge for these schemes) had worked during the war in Sweden.<sup>99</sup>

#### The six developments - a summary.

It is therefore apparent from the analysis of these six schemes that there were several different attitudes towards the architectural and planning aspects of state housing within Matthew and Martin's Housing division from 1950-1956. Interpretations of this situation have been offered by: Pevsner, who <sup>observed that</sup> "whether the change in the architectural style of the Roehampton buildings was due to the change from Robert Matthew to Leslie Martin or to the change in the team of young designers cannot be stated with certainty".<sup>100</sup>

Furneaux Jordan, more alive to the issues, stated:

E is a 'social realist', believing in the revival of a tradition, while F is a strict Formalist; they each have their place, but not on the same job. Even a superficial survey of the group of estates in Wandsworth makes this clear.<sup>101</sup>

O. Cox assessed the situation thus:

The development group originally contained the personnel who later split into the two teams responsible for Alton East and Alton West. At the time of designing the eastern part, differences of view on architectural design were becoming apparent and led to hot disputes. The 'Portsmouth Road group' were strongly influenced by the turn of the century English housing tradition and its recent reinterpretation during the war years in Sweden. The Roehampton group were equally enthusiastic supporters of 'Corbusier'. Hence the radical difference in appearance between the two parts of the estate.<sup>102</sup>

John Partridge described the situation in the following terms:

There was a debate between our group and Oliver Cox's group. We were followers of Le Corbusier, they, he maintained, followed the Swedish/Scandinavian post-war tradition that was more cosy. When I tell you that there was once a debate in a local pub to which at least 100 architects of the Housing Division came to take sides on this particular point, you will realise that feelings ran high.<sup>103</sup>

These accounts polarize the differences of the new Housing division into a Swedish and a Corbusian group. Using these two categories the analyses of the six schemes shows that there was a direct link between style and architects (figure 5). The two groups can be seen to be headed by C. Lucas and R. Stjernstedt as architects in charge. Lucas headed the Corbusier group, with C.A. St John Wilson, P.J. Carter, A.H. Colquhan, W.G. Howell, J.A.W. Killick, S.F. Amis as the main supporters. R. Stjernstedt headed the Swedish group, with C. Barr, O. Cox, B. Adams and J. Partridge as the main supporters.

Architectural affinities can also be seen within the administrative hierarchy of the Housing Division: R. Matthew was the least partisan and admitted both groups' interests. L. Martin favoured the Corbusier group and was a friend of W. Howell. Whitfield Lewis as Principal Housing architect was considered to be in the Swedish Group, although he was tolerant of the Corbusier group's ideas.<sup>104</sup> M. Powell was definitely for

the Corbusier group and was in favour of Colin Lucas' approach.<sup>105</sup>

Therefore, in terms of 'style', the new housing divisions output from 1950-1956 appears to be remarkably narrow in that it can be stylistically categorised into only two styles; one based on Le Corbusier and one on Swedish architecture. This is the more surprising given that the housing division's new structure (based upon a non-hierarchical group organisation) was headed by men like Matthew and Whitfield Lewis who applied no direct architectural direction from above. However, it is clear that financial constraints prevented the architectural teams from indulging in excessive detailing or ornamentation. Also the teams were required to use the new standardised components that the Research and Development group had developed (e.g; the use of the same windows and fenestration patterns for most of the buildings). Thus, in terms of architectural detailing there were few opportunities for individual experimentation. Architectural choice was therefore limited to aspects of, 1) choice and development of new building types (if they could be shown to be economically viable), for example the development of the point-block and the slab block with narrow fronted maisonettes; 2) choice of layout and planning principles for each new development, and choice of which building types to use.

It is for these reasons that the 'stylistic' variety of the housing division work appears rather limited, and as already stated in section 1.3, those architects interested in the Russian Socialist Realism paradigm could not attempt (other than the example of the brick bonding patterns at Alton East and Ashburton Estates) to introduce more elaborate detailing borrowed from the 19th-century housing tradition which they favoured.

However, as the debate on Le Corbusier's Unité d'Habitation in 1951 (already cited) illustrated, these two groups were not merely concerned with aesthetics. Under a discussion of town planning and social questions the report of the meeting asked:

'How much social research was carried out in the neighbourhood before the building was planned?' Another line of criticism put forward by Cleeve Barr, Oliver Cox and Robin Rocke implied that Corbusier's approach had been too arbitrary and abstract and too monumental. 'He is at fault when he suggests that it is the task of architecture to create a new way of life'. It is suggested that that is 'imposing conditions' on the people. And 'it is interesting that in Moscow, Corbusier is accused of Fascist tendencies'. Philip Powell replied that by putting people in houses at all you are 'imposing conditions' on them; 'these are simply different conditions, which, in point of fact, provide better conditions and greater liberties than any other flat developments'. And as a question of 'social research', Corbusier claims that his concept is precisely the result of twenty-five years of such research.<sup>106</sup>

This difference of ideologies is also suggested by Cox when discussing the differences between Alton East and West:

But there was another difference; the earlier scheme placed great emphasis on the expression of the individual dwelling and the tenants' use of it, which led to considerable variety developed romantically and, at times, whimsically. The later scheme repudiated this attitude and replaced it with a far more vigorous architectural emphasis of formal relationships.<sup>107</sup>

The two styles were therefore associated with distinct ideologies. The LCC Corbusier style was associated with the ideology of the New-Brutalist group and their paradigm based upon Le Corbusier and the Modern Movement (Paradigm I). The LCC Swedish style was associated with the ideologies of both the New Humanist group, and their paradigm based upon Russian Socialist Realism (Paradigm III), as well as the New Empiricist group and their paradigm based upon the Swedish model (Paradigm II).

Despite the limited available details on individual architects involved in specific schemes a further breakdown of the two stylistic groups at the LCC suggests that the Swedish group was dominated by ABT members e.g., C. Barr and O. Cox (Barr, and Cox, at least as a student, were also C.P. members) and the Corbusier group was dominated by ex-Architectural Association students.<sup>108</sup> The ideological interests of these groups can also be seen to relate to a large degree to their architectural training and education. The Swedish group, who were more politically active and radical had generally not been to public school, Cambridge University or the Architectural Association.<sup>109</sup> They were also older and had worked in other public offices, especially Hertfordshire County Council Schools Division. Most had also travelled to Sweden and seen the Swedish experiments in Welfare State Housing. By contrast the Corbusier group was dominated by architects who had been to public school, Cambridge University and/or as well as the Architectural Association. They were generally younger than the Swedish group architects and for most the LCC Housing division was their first job.

Therefore the LCC 'Swedish' style, which emphasized community, individuality, traditional detailing, an avoidance of monumentality, and an interest in reflecting the tenants' interest and needs in the design was represented by a distinct group of architects who held specific ideological and views that related to the Swedish and Russian Socialist Realist paradigms. The LCC 'Corbusier' style <sup>The style</sup> emphasised geometry, a scale of proportions based upon the Golden Section and Fibonacci series; was antipathetic to notions of individuality and individual taste; sought monumental and spectacular architectural solutions; thought like Le Corbusier that architecture determined human behaviour, and generally stressed the architectural and formal aspects of housing, was



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also represented by another distinct group of architects who held specific ideological views that related to the Corbusian paradigm.

The Matthew/Martin period, from 1950-1956, was therefore a period of intense architectural debate and experimentation, in which the architectural theories of the 1940s were finally expressed in the housing output of the LCC.

## CONCLUSION

The structure of the conclusions will be organized into three parts. The first part will summarize the findings of the six sections of the thesis. The second part will consider various themes that run throughout the entire thesis, and will draw together material from all six sections. The third part will offer a general overview and suggest a critical account of the rôle of the architect in post-war state housing.

### (1) Summary of Sections 1.1 - 2.3.

#### Part I: General Issues

Section 1.1. Debates concerning architectural practice and theory. The first section of part one considered the broader issues concerning the architectural profession which were debated during and after the second world war. These debates were first briefly related to the changes of the architect's rôle that were initiated in the inter-war period. Summerson's image of the "schizophrenic" architect was used to illustrate the new concerns of the modern architect: scientific research, sociology, psychology, engineering, and the arts. The other major change noted in the pre-war period was the increased number of architects who were employed in public offices. This was brought about both by the increased building work of local authorities, and by the problems and difficulties that beset architects trying to set up their own private practice during the depression years, which forced them to consider employment as salaried architects in large architectural firms or public offices. The growing number of salaried architects (given by AASTA in 1935 as 70% of all qualified architects), and the increasing number of

architects who considered their rôle to be one involved in social and political change, brought into question the ability of RIBA to adequately represent their interests. The formation and history of AASTA as an alternative body to RIBA, which aimed to represent the interests of salaried architects, was outlined. The part played by these two bodies, RIBA and AASTA, in the ensuing debates concerning the status and function of the public architect were then separately analysed.

RIBA's involvement in these debates was traced from the formation of a "Salaried members committee" in 1928 and a "Special Committee on Official Architecture" in 1935. The latter, chaired by Sir Raymond Unwin, suggested that public architects "cumbered about with much serving" were capable of carrying out routine work, but for buildings of civic importance private architects should be employed as they were likely to be better qualified in terms of design. This pre-war view that saw public architects as "plain men" who lacked creative skills was questioned in the debates of the war years.

RIBA's Reconstruction Committee report of 1941 considered that the increasing of the official architect's status to one comparable with other professions like doctors and lawyers, was essential if they were to play an important part in the post-war rebuilding programme. Attached to the same report was a reminder from the War Executive Committee of the existence of the "Official Architects' Committee" which was there to serve their interests. However, RIBA which was traditionally seen as a learned society that pursued and protected the standards of architecture, had no background in advancing the material conditions of its members' practice. As Summerson pointed out in 1942, it could not survive on its past prestige and its excellent library but had to adopt the function of

a Trade Union in the new conditions of the war and post-war period. This was an activity in which it was reluctant to participate, and in a lecture in 1943 the Honorary Secretary, Michael Waterhouse, stated his belief in the greater importance of RIBA maintaining standards of architecture rather than attempting to unify the architectural profession and getting involved in such conflicts.

However the increasing pressure from the public architects group is seen in the results of the 1944 RIBA council elections where six ABT (formerly AASTA) members, who represented the interests of public and salaried architects, were elected. In 1946 L.H. Keay became the first official architect to be elected president of RIBA. However he did not use his position as president to advance the case for public architects, and in his inaugural address avoided controversial issues in an attempt to unify the profession. RIBA therefore failed to <sup>fully</sup> represent the interests of the greater number of its members who were public or salaried architects, and instead attempted to maintain the position of an impartial body that was concerned with the higher aesthetic standards of architecture rather than the problems associated with architectural practice. It was left up to AASTA to take on this function.

In 1937 AASTA declared that its main aim was to improve the salaries and status of salaried architects. It saw itself as a trade union for architects and in 1939 became affiliated to the TUC. The leadership of AASTA, which was dominated by Communist and Labour Party members, saw the architect as just one member of a building team, and as a worker rather than a middle class professional. AASTA therefore considered that the architect should participate in the broader Labour Movement and attempted to involve architects in a wider area of activity other than just ones of

professional interest. AASTA, which became ABT in 1942 (a change in name which stressed the role of the architect as a building technician) increased its membership during the war, profiting from the general radicalisation of society brought about by the war. In 1945 its membership was around 3,000 which was a quarter of that of RIBA. However in the post-war period it failed to increase its support and to become the main representative body for architects. This was due mainly to its political nature which was an explicitly Marxist one. An article in Keystone in 1947 by R.C. Tickell entitled "Are we militant?" pointed out the problems ABT faced. He saw that the political aims of the group alienated many members who were more interested in winning higher salaries, and that ABT should present itself as a Union rather than a leftwing body.

By the 1950s ABT had once more become a small minority group with a decreasing membership. This was due to the increasing reaction against extreme Leftwing politics, especially Communism, in the profession and within society. Evidence of this was seen in the discussion of the political content of the teaching at the Architectural Association's school of architecture, with some readers of The Builder wanting to go as far as removing any members of staff who were Communist Party members. The 1952 discussion of the public architects' salary scale also illustrated the lack of support that ABT were attracting by the 1950s, and there was a call (which however was never acted upon) to form a new body to represent the interests of public architects.

K. Campbell's attempt in a lecture, and an article, in 1954 to present ABT as a non-militant Union was both ineffective and too late. By that date the private building industry had been stimulated by the

Conservative governments' abolition of building licences and by the recovering economy. Private architectural work then became readily available and many architects left public offices to set up their own private practice. The changing conditions of the 1950s therefore shifted the debates within the architectural profession away from those of the status and function of the public architect. The de-radicalisation of many architects meant that few were still prepared to forego their professional status and to be defined as workers who were expected to be involved with the Labour Movement and Union activity. AASTA and ABT's period of effective representative activity was therefore limited to the period 1939 to 1950.

Section 1.1 continued by looking at contemporary architectural theory and assessing the influence that this had on architectural criticism. Two intellectual attitudes were defined: the first an Hegelian "Spirit of the Age" (stripped of its metaphysics) and the second a Marxist analytical model. The writing of J.M. Richards and J. Summerson were used as examples of the former. They both defined architecture as a social art which reflected the interests and ideas of the period. Summerson also stressed the importance of the individual creator for the development of architectural ideas. Although they referred to class divisions within society when talking of past architecture, they assumed that contemporary society was already democratic and socialist. Thus the focus for modern architecture was the home, as there would be no call for large public buildings expressing the power and authority of certain sections of society. Richards and Summerson's theory therefore offered considerable advances over earlier British architectural history (which was based upon an empiricist tradition) as it related architectural style to the specific technical

and ideological interests of the society from which it was produced. However they both ignore the causal reasons for society's progress, neither retaining Hegel's spiritual dialectics nor adopting Marx's historical materialism. Their writing therefore, has nothing to say about the forces of historical change, and instead simply offers the "Spirit of the Age" concept as a model for style.

The second theoretical approach that was developed in this period was one based upon Marx's concepts of historical materialism and class war. This model was adopted by writers within the ABT group. Architectural style was seen by them as the expression of a certain class's interests. They also believed that architecture could not play a major rôle in transforming society, political and social change having to come first. Therefore before a socialist architecture could be built, society would have to be transformed into a socialist state. This led them to criticise pre-war modern architecture as merely the style of a middle-class elite, and not the true expression of the people.

These two theoretical models for defining architectural style (which were the direct result of the influx of German Idealist philosophy into Britain in the 1930s through emigré historians) were significant in that they both related style to ideology. They were subsequently used by the various architectural groups that evolved in the 1940s and 1950s. In his two articles on architectural polemics of the period, R. Banham defined three such groups, each with their own specific theoretical and ideological interests. These were New Empiricism, New Humanism and New Brutalism. New Empiricism was the result of Richards' interest in Swedish architecture which during the war had been following an empirical approach that sought to satisfy the requirements of individuals by

adopting a less doctrinaire approach than that of the formalism and idealism of the Functionalists. This New Empiricist approach was discussed and disseminated through the AR, which Richards edited. The New Humanism was based upon Marxist concepts, and thought that architects should express the interests and tastes of the people. It was mainly a theoretical and political approach to architecture; although followers of these beliefs had an interest in 19th<sup>century</sup> British domestic architecture. New Brutalism was based upon the interests and ideas of the International Modern Movement, especially on the work of Le Corbusier. It promoted the new techniques and building types of this movement as suitable solutions to contemporary housing problems, and believed that architecture could transform social consciousness prior to political or social change.

Associated with these three ideological groupings was the development of three paradigms for a socialist reconstruction of post-war Britain. These were based upon 1) the Modern Movement (especially the ideas of Le Corbusier), 2) Sweden, 3) Russia. The Le Corbusian paradigm took the Unité d'Habitation at Marseille as an architectural model to follow, as well as the use of the Modulor scale. In their original context the use of this building type and the Modulor scale were intended to provide both a social and aesthetic experience. This would result in an harmonious life for its inhabitants, who would then bring about broader social and political changes. These views of Le Corbusier, based on his belief in the doctrines of Regional Syndicalism, were presented in his writing and his lectures in a quasi-metaphysical way that hindered and obscured critical appraisal. The articles and reviews of Le Corbusier's work in British journals were analysed and seen to have a very limited critical content which only focused on formal architectural aspects. Hence this paradigm, in the hands of the New Brutalists, was very easily reduced to



an apolitical model which gave priority to architectural rather than social or political interests. It also encouraged a high degree of formalism and sought monumental architectural effects.

The second paradigm was based upon the example of Sweden's Welfare State architecture. Sweden, as a neutral country, had continued to build throughout the war and therefore had examples of recent building techniques and types. There were two attitudes to Sweden's Welfare state; one that saw it as a model for post-war Britain to follow and another that saw it as merely one step towards the final aim of a complete socialist state. The former attitude was that taken by the New Empiricists and the latter by the more radical New Humanists, who believed that both Sweden and Britain would only produce a great architecture when a Communist state was achieved. The New Empiricism as defined in the AR in 1943 and 1947 was a democratic architecture empirically produced. This produced a new collectivist aesthetic which was against individual expression, and could be seen in Sweden's standardised housing grouped into visible communities. Although this paradigm was essentially one followed by New Empiricists, it also became adopted by the New Humanists as an economically viable alternative to one based upon 19th<sup>century</sup> traditions.

The third paradigm that was identified in the interests and literature of the period was one based upon the Russian Communist state. The early 1940s saw a widespread interest in the developing Communist state in Russia, and prior to the start of cold war policies in the 1950s was seen as a possible model for post-war Britain. It was also associated with the Marxist analytical model for style. This interpreted the return to a classical style in Russia in the 1930s as an expression

of the tastes of the people. This analysis of style meant that architectural form took on meaning depending on the specific context of its use. Exponents of this paradigm did not therefore suggest that neo-classicism would be an appropriate style for post-war Britain, but rather looked for architectural forms that they considered expressed the tastes and interests of the British people. This led the New Humanists, who adopted this paradigm, to consider 19th<sup>Century</sup> domestic architectural traditions rather than new modern architectural solutions that they associated with a pre-war middle-class elite.

The development of new analytical models to define architectural style in the early 1940s therefore had considerable impact on the subsequent debates on architecture. They in turn generated the three distinct groups of New Empiricism, New Humanism, and New Brutalism. These three groups also developed models or paradigms that offered political, social and architectural options for a socialist reconstruction of Britain. These were isolated and described as a Le Corbusian, a Swedish and a Russian paradigm.

Section 1.2. Central Government Policy 1939-1956. This section outlined central Government housing policy by analysing governmental reports, white papers, Housing Acts and Housing manuals. The pre-war situation was briefly described using M. Bowley's analysis which defined pre-war strategies into three experiments. The difference between Conservative and Labour party policies was shown. The Conservative's policy was one of minimal State intervention in the supply of houses, except in periods of crisis (as for example after the first world war) and for slum clearance programmes (which were unprofitable for private builders and speculators to build). Labour policy was shown to be one based on a

belief in greater state responsibility for providing and improving working class housing.

The war period produced in the form of the Dudley Report (1944), a major reassessment of policy for the provision of working class state housing. The report introduced several innovatory ideas, the most important being the concept of local authorities building complete communities with a social balance. These were to be achieved by local authorities employing architects, thus ensuring that the building work would "add to the beauties of town and countryside", and by building homes for different income groups. The difficulties raised by mixing families of different income groups were to be avoided by planning the neighbourhoods with separate minor groups of dwellings for 100 to 300 families, each one having its own distinctive character.

However these radical new recommendations were not followed by the coalition government. In the Housing Manual 1944 no mention was made of mixed development or social balance. The coalition government's White Paper "Housing: Government policy and organization for carrying it into effect", which was debated in the House of Commons in March 1945, also avoided any reference to the Dudley Report's controversial proposals. In the debate, despite the home being seen as a central factor in maintaining a contented workforce, no questions concerning the housing strategy or its ideological implications were raised. The coalition government, dominated by Conservative members who believed in home ownership and housing being provided by private builders, was therefore content to let what were basically pre-war Conservative policies be continued into the post-war period.

The 1945 election forced both the Conservative and the Labour parties to more fully define their post-war housing strategies, which they stated in their election manifestos. The Conservative strategy was a sophisticated mix of pre-war policies with new ideas taken from the Dudley Report. The home was seen by them to have the function of elevating the poor so that they would bring up a more numerous and stronger future workforce. This in turn would prevent Britain from becoming a third class power. To provide these ideal homes both local authorities and private builders were to be involved in building. However, after the initial post-war housing crisis was over the state was not to be involved in housing, which would then return to normal market conditions of supply and demand. The planning of the new housing was to follow the Dudley Report's ideas for social balance, which meant that "all grades" of the community would be provided for by both houses to rent and to buy. Thus the Conservative party's housing strategy included new radical proposals for rebuilding communities. This was based upon a vague idea of social progress, but it overlaid a pre-war Conservative ideology that favoured private builders and market conditions.

Labour's election material gave few <sup>a</sup> details of a future Socialist housing policy. It mentioned the control of planning and building to prevent uncontrolled speculative developments, the state control of the building industry, and the Nationalisation of land. However, although it assumed that post-war Britain would be a democratic Socialist State, it made no reference to the rebuilding programme being based on the concepts of mixed development to produce socially balanced communities. Labour's housing strategy was therefore very ill defined and reflected the compromise in the party between the Labour leadership and members further to the left who expected a more radical set of proposals.

In the new Labour government the Minister of Health, who was also responsible for housing, was Aneurin Bevan. Bevan who was a democratic socialist also held Marxist views. He believed that the Marxist model of class war could be resolved by parliamentary socialism rather than revolution. This led him to develop a housing programme that attempted to reduce class divisions and distinctions in society. In the debate on housing in the House of Commons in October 1945, Bevan declared his intention of first providing homes for the lower income groups who had fared badly under pre-war Conservative Governments. He wished to move away from the pre-war situation in which local authorities had been responsible for providing housing for the lower income groups, and private builders housing for the higher income groups. This had produced segregated communities which he called "castrated communities". In his programme local authorities were to become the main agents for the production of housing and private builders were to be controlled by a Licensing system. Complete communities were to be built by local authorities by following the ideas of mixed development, described by this date in the Dudley Report, the County of London Plan, and the Greater London Plan. Bevan's housing strategy therefore attempted to remove class divisions from post-war rebuilding programmes, instead replacing them by divisions based upon income. This subtle shift, from one of cultural and ideological divisions, to ones based purely on income levels offered a far more flexible and democratic model of society. However in the ensuing debate in the House of Commons the main discussion came from the Conservatives who feared the displacement of the private builder from the rebuilding programme. This self interest prevented the debate from confronting the main ideological changes in state housing that Bevan's policy offered.

When this was translated into the 1946 Housing Act, few of Labour's more radical ideas were made into legislation. The Act continued the concept of the State subsidy system and said nothing of land ownership or nationalisation. It therefore kept the scope of local authority housing to the provision of working class housing. However it did substantially raise the subsidies which also included higher subsidies for flats on expensive sites and for lifts in flats of over 4-stories. These subsidy changes did at least facilitate the building of mixed development schemes where flats in high blocks were used. The quality of the parliamentary debate on the Act was again very limited, and the main points raised were once more by the Conservative members who were concerned with the interests of the private builder. Bevan also stated that he defined the term "working class" very broadly, thus allowing local authorities to let their accommodation to the middle classes. However it was not until the 1949 Housing Act that this was finally written into the statute books.

In the debate on the 1949 Housing Act Bevan stated that it was more than time that the "obsolete and vulgar division of society into classes" was removed. The phrase "working class" was duly removed from the wording of the Housing Act, thus increasing the state's rôle in the provision of housing. The Housing Manual 1949 finally introduced the Dudley Report's recommendations into official policy and guidelines. Therefore by 1949 the concept of local authorities building complete and balanced communities that were expected to be architecturally competent, had become government policy. Bevan, in his term of office had therefore only managed to implement what were in effect, rather minor changes in housing legislation.

Housing was a key election issue in 1951. The Conservative's

strategy was to attack both the Labour government's housing achievement purely on the numbers of new dwellings constructed, and to redirect the class-based nature of Bevan's arguments to ones based upon the rôle of the home and family in a Christian nation. This was an extremely clever and subtle ploy that effectively depoliticised the housing issue and replaced it with vague notions of morality and religion. A new target figure of 300,000 homes (50% higher than Labour's figure) was to be achieved both by letting private builders as well as local authorities build new homes, and by reducing space standards. The Conservative election strategy was successful and returned them to office. Harold Macmillan was the new Minister in charge of housing and implemented this policy. The 1953 White Paper "Housing the next step" outlined the Conservative's future housing policy which was a return to pre-war strategies that reduced the rôle of the state to one concerned only with slum clearance, allowing the private builder free reign in the provision of all other housing. In 1954 the Building Licence system was removed and in 1956 the subsidy for general needs housing. Therefore, by 1956, all the innovatory policies that Bevan had introduced in his attempt to redefine the rôle that housing in a Socialist Welfare State should play, had been abolished. This returned housing to the capitalist free market conditions of supply and demand.

Section 1.3. The organization and control of LCC Housing 1939-1956. The final section of part one analysed the control of housing at the local authority level, taking the London County Council as its area for research. The analysis started by outlining the complex decision-making machinery that was involved in the Council's housing work, describing the different functions of the committees and departments. This illustrated

how far removed the architect working on the designs of the buildings was from those making decisions about the council's housing. The division of the overall task of producing housing into specialist areas and committees also tended to inhibit new approaches and force compromise. For example the Finance Committee had considerable power of veto for any scheme which failed to come within predetermined cost limits.

The structure of the Architects' Department of 1939 was described. J.H. Forshaw was appointed to the new post of Deputy Architect in 1939. His background as a progressive architect showed that the LCC were anxious to appoint a first class modern architect who would be familiar with contemporary ideas. Forshaw's work at the LCC during the war was mainly taken up with the preparation of the County of London Plan (1941-43), which he co-wrote with Prof. P. Abercrombie. In 1945 he streamlined the organisation of the Architects' department and set up a new Town Planning division.

After the war the pressure to produce the maximum number of homes made the Housing and Public Health committee reconsider the control of its housing organization. At a special meeting, on the 14th November 1945, they decided to remove the control of housing work from Forshaw and to give it to the Valuer. C. Walker was thus created the Director of Housing and Valuer of a new Housing and Valuation Department. This was to be for an initial trial period of three years. In this time Forshaw was only to be allowed to add reports on certain housing schemes concerning their architectural treatment if he saw fit. The background to this exceptional decision was investigated fully.

It appears that the reasons of speed and economy, that were given for this decision, covered up a more complex set of oppositions and



problems. Forshaw's proposals for the reconstruction of London which were stated in the County of London Plan had been accepted in principle by the LCC in July 1944. These involved the creation of new open spaces, new networks of road and the building of new neighbourhoods based on the mixed development theory. Many on the Housing and Public Health Committee and the LCC (especially Lord Latham, the Leader of the Council, and C.W. Gibson, the chairman of the Housing and Public Health committee) believed that Forshaw's proposals were idealistic and totally impractical, and more importantly, that they would hold up the production of new homes in the immediate post-war period. Although the records contain no documents that explicitly state it, it appears that Latham, Gibson, and the Chief Clerk conspired to remove housing from Forshaw. The first step taken by them was to advertise for a new Valuer in October 1944. This described the new post as the "Council's chief adviser on housing". The appointment of C. Walker, a forceful man who had experience of running local authority housing work (although he was a surveyor and had no architectural qualifications) was of extreme importance. The decision of the Council to give responsibility for housing solely to the Valuer, was therefore more concerned with abandoning Forshaw's radical ideas for post-war housing. Instead it favoured a return to a pre-war strategy, which would build 4- and 5-storey blocks of flats on in-county sites regardless of other planning or architectural principles.

Walker's new Housing and Valuation Department was made up of architects seconded from the Architects' Department. These included S. Howard who was promoted to Housing Architect. The importance of architectural concerns in the new housing department had therefore been drastically reduced to a secondary rôle by placing the architectural

responsibility for housing under Howard (an acting Senior architect) instead of Forshaw (the Chief Architect to the Council).

Thus the responsibility for housing was removed from Forshaw, and with it any obligation to follow the County of London Plan. Forshaw therefore resigned in December 1945, moving to the Ministry of Health to become the Chief Architect and Housing Consultant to Bevan. In 1948 it was decided to extend the trial period another year and so delay assessment of the success of Walker's new department until December 1948.

Forshaw was replaced as Architect to the Council by R.H. Matthew, and the post of Deputy Architect was reinstated in 1948 with the appointment of L. Martin. Both these appointments showed the Council to be looking for, and attracting, top quality architects with both strong academic backgrounds as well as practical experience of working in modern techniques.

The internal changes in the control of LCC housing were also public<sub>ly</sub> debated. The main area for this debate was in the pages of the Architects' Journal, which took issue with the decision of the LCC to give charge of its housing to the Valuer who was not architecturally qualified. This lengthy critique of the Valuers's housing was initiated in February 1949 by an exhibition of LCC housing. Richards visited this exhibition and publically criticised the quality of the work in a radio talk 'The critics' discussion of London Housing'. His main objections were that the housing schemes were architecturally "inept" (he singles out the 8-storey blocks at Woodberry Down Estate and the concrete blocks at Minerva Estate) and that they did not follow the principles of the County of London Plan. His main interest was in the formal and architectural aspects of the housing; the social and political

implications of the work were not discussed. This talk led to a years debate in the Architects' Journal, from March 1949 to March 1950, but was especially intense in the first four months.

The debate included a request for readers of the journal to write in with their views on the quality of the Valuer's housing, as well as the suggestion of setting up an impartial jury made up of members from the RIBA Council. This was an unprecedented situation in which architects were encouraged to criticise their own colleagues' work. By doing this Richards hoped to break through the professional code of practice which discouraged this kind of in-house criticism. The journal published 67 letters, of which only four were not openly critical of the Valuer's housing. The main issues raised were the criticism of design details, and a discussion of office organization and its effect upon design and the need for research. Only two letters mentioned the political implications of housing. The public criticism in the Architects' Journal was therefore very limited and failed to cover the broader issues concerning housing.

The LCC's response to the initial criticism was to offer to hold another exhibition of their housing work. This was shown in May 1949 and was followed by the publication in October of a pamphlet, Housing: a survey of the post-war housing work of the LCC 1945-49. This public debate coincided with the end of the four year trial period of having control of housing under the Valuer. In December 1949 the Housing Committee held a special meeting to consider the organization of their housing work. They decided to return housing to the Architect. Walker, the Director of Housing and Valuer, in his report had stated that the need was still to produce the maximum number of homes, which his policies

were achieving, and that architecturally his housing work had been unfairly criticised. He polarised the debate into two opposing attitudes; his own view which considered that the Council's housing should give priority to the numbers of dwellings produced, and that these buildings should be well constructed and easy to maintain, even if this meant that they were architecturally conservative. This he saw as preferable to the views of Matthew which he considered to be too concerned with "town planning idealism and contemporary architectural trends". These opposing views were therefore identical to those debated in 1945. However, in 1949 the Housing Committee decided in favour of architectural and town planning interests. This shift in interests of the Housing Committee was due to the changed situation: the public debate of the LCC's housing had brought architectural aspects to the fore, and there had been changes in the membership of the Housing Committee (especially important was the election of E. Denington to Vice-chairman in May 1949). From the 1st January 1950 the control of housing was returned to Matthew, Architect to the Council.

Matthew had stated in his report that if he were asked to set up a new Housing Division he would require staff of a high quality. To attract them he insisted that they offer higher salaries than normal. By the middle of 1950 he had achieved this and had staffed his new division with W. Lewis as Principal Housing Architect, M. Powell as Assistant Housing Architect, C. Lucas and R. Stjernstedt as two experienced architects to take charge of the new teams, and C. Barr and O. Cox who initially worked in the Research and Development Group. One of the key issues in the debate concerning control of the Council's housing had therefore been the quality of the pre-war architectural staff. By allowing Matthew to create a completely new division it had been possible

to rapidly introduce a large number of high quality modern architects into the Council's Architects' Department. Matthew also organised the Housing Division into a group or team structure rather than the traditional office hierarchical system. This gave greater design opportunities to the younger architects. The setting up of a Research and Development group was also of major significance, as it placed a much greater emphasis upon developing new construction techniques and new building types rather than relying on traditional techniques and old designs and plans.

## Part II: The Housing Work of the LCC 1939-1956

Section 2.1. The Forshaw Period 1939-1945. The pre-war housing policy of the LCC was outlined, showing that from the mid-1930s it had concentrated on high density in-county flatted estates using 5-storey balcony access blocks. These schemes were generally architecturally very limited, built in a simple neo-Georgian style with minimal detailing. Some exceptions were noted; the Oaklands Estate with its horizontal banding patterns and curved balconies was used as an example to illustrate the Council's attempt to create a less austere and institutionalised atmosphere in buildings that were located in more middle-class residential areas. However, compared to more progressive housing work (the example of Tecton's work for Finsbury Borough council was cited) even the new Type plans for staircase access flats, introduced by the Council in 1936, were shown to be very conservative. The layout procedures for these schemes used blocks arranged around open sided courtyards which produced unimaginative developments, especially on large schemes like the White City Estate.

The new ideas introduced by Forshaw were outlined. The evidence he submitted to the Dudley Report in 1942 which described the Council's policy on housing was shown to contain no radical proposals. In 1942 he set up a research department to consider new materials, layout and design. From 1941 to 1943 Forshaw's main work was in co-writing the County of London Plan which formed the basis for his ideas for the future housing policy of the Council. In March 1943 a report, "Housing after the war", showed that the Council intended to use pre-war plans in the immediate post-war period to simplify and speed up building operations. This left little scope for Forshaw, as the Housing and Public Health committee were to allow him to replan schemes only in a few exceptional cases. One such case was the Woodberry Down development.

Forshaw and Abercrombie's County of London Plan was analysed; its socialist premises were noted as well as its general aim of creating a "new world" in which greater equality of incomes would result in a greater social mix. The main planning concept of the plan was its definition of community, which was based upon A. Ling's research under Abercrombie. This also included the idea of mixed development which provided both an architectural mix of building types (which included high blocks of flats and houses) as well as a mix of income groups. The plan remained open-minded on aesthetics, although the two artist's impressions that were illustrated showed modern design solutions.

The Housing and Public Health Committee and the Council both accepted the plan in principle in 1943, although the Valuer and the Comptroller thought it idealistic and impractical to implement. For them the idea of a planned rebuilding, based upon new socialist principles, was out of the question as it was seen to be too expensive and would slow

down housing output. The Valuer, who was then Westwood, also disagreed with the idea of mixed development and the use of high flats for council tenants, instead suggesting the use of 4-storey blocks. Therefore in 1943 the Council was dominated by men like Latham, Leader of the Council, Gibson, Chairman of the Housing and Public Health Committee, and the Valuer and Comptroller, who all still defined the rôle of state housing in pre-war terms.

Forshaw's main contribution to the Council's housing work was his development of the Woodberry Down scheme. This site had been planned in 1938, and had utilised 2- to 5-storey blocks, linked to form large open courtyards. The central feature was to have been blocks joined to form a large horseshoe shape. The influence for this plan had been both the Quarry Hill scheme in Leeds and the European examples that L. Silkin, Chairman of the Housing and Public Health Committee, had seen on a tour of European housing schemes in 1935. Forshaw however wished to replan this site as a complete neighbourhood unit based on the County of London Plan principles. This used a mixed development of 2, 3, 5- and 8-storey blocks, with central communal facilities and a separate area for industry. These new plans were discussed by the Housing and Public Health Committee at a special meeting in March 1943. Latham was most concerned with developing the site to achieve the maximum number of homes, and saw the whole development as an exceptional case and a one-off experiment. The Valuer disliked the use of mixed development and high flats and the Comptroller pointed out that the 8-storey flats would be at least 50% more expensive. After further meetings an adapted scheme was approved by the committee in October 1945, just two months before Forshaw resigned after losing control of housing.

The Woodberry Down scheme was analysed and the innovatory features of the layout and design noted. The blocks were orientated N/S in parallel rows rather than around rectangular courtyards as in pre-war layouts. The development attempted a mix of block types ranging from 2- to 8-storeys, but due to the high overall density that the Council insisted upon, it was only possible to achieve 94% flats and 6% houses. The use of the pre-existing road network also meant that the principles of community planning could not be fully implemented. The construction of the 8-storey blocks was based on the Council's very limited experience of using reinforced concrete (as at Minerva and Flower House estates). Their conservative approach (when compared to the work the engineer O. Arup did for Tecton) to construction techniques was related to the quality of the engineering advice supplied by the contractors. The 8-storey blocks were stylistically assessed and the architect's approach to façade composition outlined. The detailing of the blocks was shown to include references to Swedish neo-Classicism, the Modern Movement, and Art Deco styles. The architects working in the Council's Architects' Department were therefore only capable of producing a design that was derivative and stylistically inconsistent, and not one that exploited the use of the new material.

Forshaw's work at the LCC was therefore frustrated by a Housing and Public Health Committee who were unwilling to commit themselves to new radical policies (that were potentially highly expensive) before the post-war housing legislation had been decided. They were also policies that totally redefined the pre-war definition of the rôle of state housing, and broke completely with the traditions of LCC housing. It was therefore not altogether surprising that Forshaw failed to convince all the members of the Housing and Public Health Committee and the Council of



the viability of his new proposals.

Section 2.2. The Walker Period 1945-1950. The LCC's pre-war policy of in-county 5-storey flatted estates and out-county dormitory cottage estates was briefly outlined. H. Morrison and L. Silkin's interest in developing a new policy of satellite towns was shown to be impossible due to the Council's lack of power and money. The further development after the war of out-county sites was criticised in Abercrombie's Greater London Plan, published in 1945, in which he suggested restricting the LCC to seven green belt sites. The LCC however considered the Greater London Plan was as idealistic as the County of London Plan, and decided to treat its proposals as flexible, and so continued to buy out-county sites. However in 1946 the purchase of a site of natural beauty at Chessington provoked opposition to out-county developments from members of the LCC. Despite this the Council (by a narrow majority) decided to go ahead with the purchase. However Silkin, who was the new Minister for Town and Country Planning in the Labour Government, had adopted the proposals of the Greater London Plan as Government policy and was against LCC out-county dormitory cottage estates. He therefore refused the Council planning permission at Chessington.

The debates concerning the building of out-county estates had two effects, first it forced the Council to develop its out-county estates with some degree of mixed development, providing housing for a small percentage of higher income groups, and secondly it concentrated most of the Council's later housing work on high density in-county estates. The green belt sites debate therefore illustrated the compromises that had to be made between policies that sought to maximise housing output and those which attempted to control and plan the rebuilding of London.

The Greater London Plan also stressed the need to build socially balanced communities by the application of mixed development. The plan mentioned the architectural treatment of new schemes, suggesting a range of five different affinities or styles. However the illustrations in the plan are of developments designed in a modern style, which suggest that this was the style that Abercrombie preferred for a socialist reconstruction of London.

The LCC's response to the Greater London Plan, and the pressure prior to the 1949 Housing Act to develop its out-county estates as socially balanced communities, was to introduce six new type plans for larger houses for higher income groups. These were to be built on out-county sites at not more than 5% of the total accommodation, and were envisaged for use by managerial and professional workers. The social and architectural mix (of the 17 type plans for cottages that the Council used nearly all were 2-storey and had a simple rectangular form, thus producing little variety when combined in terraces) of these estates was therefore extremely limited.

Harold Hill and Sheerwater Estates were used as examples of the Council's out-county estates. The use of architectural form and detailing to signify social order and status was demonstrated. The whole experiment in constructing complete and socially balanced communities, carried out by the Council on its out-county estates from 1945 to 1950, was therefore shown to have been of limited success.

The range and quality of Walker's in-county housing was demonstrated by analysing Kingswood and Lansbury Estates. Kingswood was an attempt by Walker at designing a complete neighbourhood unit like Woodberry Down, but without using blocks of flats of over 4-storeys. This produced a

limited mix; 82% flats and 12% houses. Architecturally, the scheme merely applied rather timid modern details to traditional LCC balcony and staircase access blocks. The Lansbury site was developed as part of the Festival of Britain "Live Architecture" exhibition and only two sites were entrusted to Walker's Housing and Valuation department. This in itself was seen as a loss of faith in Walker's competence to represent the Council in terms of architecture. The 3 and 6-storey blocks however were of a slightly higher architectural standard, as they were designed in consultation with Matthew.

The growing concern in the quality of the architecture of the Council's housing came from Conservative members of the Housing Committee in 1947, who attempted to set up sub-committees to look into design aspects. This attempt was unsuccessful and it was not until 1949, after the public debate in the Architects' Journal had started, that two sub-committees of the Housing Committee were formed. The election of E. Denington (who was concerned with design aspects of the Council's housing) to Vice-chairman of the Housing Committee in 1949, also meant that architectural aspects were given a higher priority. Therefore at the end of the four year trial period of the control of housing under Walker, the situation had changed considerably. The Housing Committee in December 1949 decided to return the control of housing to the Architect, Matthew. The period from 1945-50 was thus one dominated by the conservative attitudes of Walker, Gibson and Latham, who were content to apply what were basically pre-war policies, which gave priority to maximum output at the cost of design and planning advances.

Section 2.3. The Matthew and Martin Period 1950-1956. Matthew's new Housing Division was staffed by mid-1950, and started to develop new

policies and type plans. The first schemes worked on were large sites of exceptional quality in Wandsworth. These had been the grounds of Victorian and Edwardian mansions and had fine mature planting. Walker's plans for these sites had been for 4 and 5-storey developments (these had been accepted in principle by the Housing Committee in 1949) which would not have exploited the sites natural qualities. However Matthew's new plans used a mixed development approach which included 11-storey blocks, thus allowing most of the trees to be retained.

The first scheme to be planned in this way was the Prince's Way site. Matthew's justification for the use of point blocks in this type of mixed development were mainly architectural. However the Comptroller thought that the new point blocks were expensive and should be seen only as an experiment. Walker also disagreed with their use, as he foresaw maintenance and living problems, disliking the way that each building type only provided one size of accommodation. This point that the new blocks only catered for one size of family was seen by Walker to undermine the social interaction and welfare of the tenants living in them; he likened the old balcony access blocks, with long public balconies, to streets where neighbours could socialise. In a later report Matthew argued that the problems of segregation caused by this differentiation of building type to family size, could be avoided by mixing the building types around common greens.

The new divisions main strategy was therefore to develop more advanced forms of mixed development. However, the mix catered for in these schemes, was only an architectural one and not a social one based upon income. These new policies were not challenged, except for an interest by some Conservative members of the Housing Committee in

promoting the development of high density in-county estates using 2-storey houses. This idea was not pursued. The results of surveys done by the Architects' Department's sociologist also suggested that high flats were liked by the Council's tenants, provided that they didn't have young children.

The Research and Development Group designed new components, such as window frames, and also new flat type plans. These reduced wasted circulation space and provided different arrangements of living areas to cater for the new lifestyles of families. The advances in terms of planning and design, that the new Housing Division had introduced, were demonstrated to the Housing Committee in a special exhibition which Martin organised in 1954, the content of which was clearly meant to contrast with Walker's exhibition in 1949.

The issue of the provision of in-county higher income housing had been avoided by the Council even on their large Wandsworth schemes. The only example of an in-county mixed development scheme was Boydell Court, designed by private architects. By 1955 the Housing Committee had decided not to attempt any further experiments in socially mixed developments on either in-or out-county estates.

Six schemes were chosen from the housing output (1950-56) of the new division to represent the major architectural and planning ideas that were introduced. The Prince's Way scheme (Ackroydon Estate) was shown to exhibit an interest in International style aesthetics, as seen in the designs of the T-shaped 11-storey point blocks and the 4-storey superimposed maisonettes. This was contrasted to an interest in the layout of producing an intimate and informal environment (by careful landscaping and siting of the various building types) which related to

Swedish precedents.

The design team for the Highbury Quadrant scheme (Quadrant Estate) declared their interest in creating a successful environment and community, rather than producing spectacular architectural effects. They developed a 5-storey block for the scheme, which was used with 2-storey housing and 3-and 4-storey blocks of flats. The lower buildings were placed at the periphery of the estate where they merged with the existing 19th-century development.

The Portsmouth Road scheme (Alton East estate) continued the mixed development theory of Ackroydon one stage further by using point blocks with four flats per floor; this facilitated in the overall scheme 40% houses and maisonettes, and 60% flats. The layout was informal and irregular and avoided monumental architectural effects. The design team attempted to impart a sense of individuality on the various blocks by the use of colour and different tile and paint patterns. Each façade of the point blocks were also different. Apart from the use of a brick bonding pattern for the end walls of the maisonettes, which was copied from the nearby 1921 Roehampton cottage estate, the design and layout of the scheme was based on Swedish examples.

The Loughborough Road site (Loughborough Estate) was the first scheme in which architects in the Housing Division, who were influenced by the work of Le Corbusier (especially the Unité d'Habitation) attempted to create a Corbusian "ville radieuse". They developed an 11-storey slab block of narrow fronted maisonettes. Although this showed visible affinities to the Unité block, it had a simple internal organization of balcony access maisonettes and therefore did not attempt to create a "vertical garden city". The narrow fronted maisonette type was developed

further at Bentham Road, where the frontage was reduced by using an internal toilet and bathroom. A mock-up of this type was built before accepting the plans to test tenant reaction to the new internal layout.

Roehampton Lane (Alton West Estate) was a more successful attempt, than Loughborough Road, at creating a Corbusian style community. This was mainly due to the quality of the site which had mature planting and sloping parkland. The design team used a modified version of Le Corbusier's Modulor scale for both the layout and the block design. The scheme represented the most complete example of an implementation of Le Corbusier's theories and designs.

The Brookland Park scheme (Brookland Park Estate) developed a 5-storey point block which was used in combination with 2-storey terraced housing. Both point blocks and houses had pitched roofs, and as at the Quadrant Estate, the design teams interests were concerned with creating an intimate and domestic environment rather than spectacular architectural effects.

The summary of the six schemes notes that in the work of the new Housing Division, there appeared to be only two stylistic approaches used. One was based on Swedish architecture and another on the theory and work of Le Corbusier. This limited stylistic variety was related to the problems of having to design within strict cost limits, thus restricting the type and amount of architectural detailing that could be included. Design was therefore seen to be primarily restricted to aspects of layout and the development of new building types.

The two styles were shown to relate to two distinct groups of architects, the Swedish style to a group led by Stjernstedt and the Le

Corbusier style to a group led by Lucas. These stylistic preferences also represented different ideological interests of the architects. The Swedish style was adopted by architects interested in the ideas of New Empiricism and New Humanism, which in turn related to the Swedish and Russian paradigms. The Le Corbusier style was adopted by architects interested in the ideas of New Brutalism, which also related to the Le Corbusier paradigm. Despite limited biographical details further links between the architects class position, education, training, and their political, ideological and stylistic preferences were made.

The Matthew and Martin period was therefore shown to have been one in which major advances in design and planning were made in the housing work of the LCC. These were mainly ideas that Forshaw had unsuccessfully attempted to introduce between 1939 and 1945. However, politically and socially this work represented few advances upon pre-war housing policy.

(ii) Thematic Analysis. The two most important themes that run throughout the thesis are 1) the definitions that were proposed for a new structure for post-war British society, and 2) the development of an architectural style to represent and express these new attitudes and social structures. These two themes will be summarised in this section.

Definitions for post-war society. The war had a great impact on the public debates concerning the political and social structure of British society. It produced a general radicalisation of society which brought about a definite break with pre-war attitudes and policies. The war, which was also seen as a fight against Fascism and pre-war inequalities, encouraged a broad based acceptance within society of the need for a more democratic society. Thus most of the new plans and ideas for the



reconstruction of Britain were based upon general socialist principles. These were shown in the research to be developed in a wide range of contexts. The first published definitions were in the war-time political pamphlets and reports. The Labour Party's pamphlets, such as The old world and the new society (1942) and Housing and planning after the war (1943), talked of major structural changes within society which the war had brought about. These opinions were based upon the Marxist concept of Historical Materialism which saw this as a change from Capitalism to Socialism. The County of London Plan (1943), the Dudley Report (1944) and the Greater London Plan (1945), also all assumed a restructuring of society along socialist principles, which would produce greater equality and reduce the class divisions within society.

Although there was a wide variety of theoretical ideas contained in these definitions, ranging from a Marxist to a Liberal viewpoint, the debates were generally reduced to ones which conceived of the leveling out of society in terms of income level. The model post-war society was therefore defined by differences of income into a two tier society of lower and higher income groups. This replaced the concept of class, which also implied cultural and ideological differences, with determinants that were based solely on economic factors.

These views were also seen to be shared by architectural critics; Summerson's essay, "The New Groundwork of Architecture" of 1942, assumed a contemporary classless society, and Boyd's writing based upon a Marxist analytical model also anticipated a post-war socialist society with a dominant working class. The war period also saw the radicalisation of the architectural profession, with many architects becoming Labour or Communist Party members, and joining the leftwing ABT group. Thus, by

the end of the war, all the major groups that were to be involved in the post-war housing debates had acknowledged that important structural changes had occurred in British society.

The 1945 election translated these ideological changes into political reality by returning a Labour government. In 1951, Richards summed this up in an editorial leader:

Rightly or wrongly the general public, after the last war, decided that a Labour government was better fitted to attempt to create what, after the first world war was called "a land fit for heroes" than a Conservative one. The whole idea of trying to plan the rebuilding and development of a democratic country was a new one, but there was a precedent, of a kind. The whole nation had been planned and trained to become an efficient fighting machine in a world war. Surely, people thought, if such enormous energies can be harnessed to fight they can be harnessed to peaceful purposes. And so, some of the war-time restrictions were left and adjusted by a Labour government to serve peace-time ends.

Bevan, the 1945-51 Labour Government's Minister responsible for housing, attempted to develop these ideas into government housing policy in the 1946 and 1949 Housing Acts. His Marxist views, tempered by a belief in Parliamentary Socialism, produced a housing strategy which sought, by architecture and planning, to reduce pre-war class distinctions. To help achieve this he borrowed the concept of 'Mixed development' from the Dudley Report, the County of London Plan, and the Greater London Plan. This concept defined neighbourhood development not only in architectural and planning terms, but also in sociological ones. New developments were expected to provide housing for both the lower and higher income groups, and to create complete and socially balanced communities. However Bevan failed to resolve the problems of land ownership, and the issue of Nationalisation of land was never raised. Bevan's state control of housing therefore relied upon a simultaneous encouragement of local authorities to produce housing to meet the needs

of all sections of the community, and a restriction of the rôle of private builders in the housing market by a system of Building Licences.

This new rôle for the state in the supply of housing was never adequately debated or dealt with in the broader ideological domain, and thus failed to become accepted by the British public. The 1951 election campaign, which used housing as a central issue, illustrated these ideological conflicts which saw Labour standing for collective interests and the Conservative's for those of the individual. Richards, again, summarised the situation: "Today the country stands divided equally between the party supporting the enterprise of the individual and the party supporting a controlled, planned development<sup>2</sup>". The return of a Conservative Government meant that the limited advances which Bevan had introduced in the 1946 and 1949 Housing Acts were soon removed, returning the state's rôle in housing to a pre-war one based upon Conservative policies. Housing was therefore only very briefly part of the general move towards a socialist Britain. The implementation of this short lived socialist housing strategy was seen in the case of the LCC to be of a very limited success. In their in-county developments they made no attempt to construct socially mixed communities, and in their out-county estates from 1947 to 1955 only achieved minimal advances by constructing 5% of the accommodation for the higher income groups.

Therefore, by 1956, the structural changes to society that were believed to have occurred in the ideological domains in 1945, had failed to be developed or implemented in political terms. The failure of the Labour Government to transform the economic base of British society, beyond making the first steps towards a Welfare State capitalist economy, resulted in few changes in the class system of British Society. Bevan's

Marxist based housing strategy therefore stood as an isolated attempt at restructuring post-war British society. Neither supported by economic or ideological transformations, it was ineffective and destined to failure. Even a Labour dominated local authority such as the LCC failed to grasp the new potential offered by the 1949 Housing Act, and never saw its rôle as the main building agency for providing housing for all inhabitants of London.

The issue of class, and class interests, was critical within the dynamics of this debate. Both at the professional and political level the decision-making bodies were dominated by the middle classes; working class representation being negligible. Of the architects at the LCC whose biographies were available (restricted to those involved in the six schemes developed in Matthew's new housing division),<sup>3</sup> all were from middle and upper-middle class backgrounds. It is therefore probable that most architects working on LCC housing schemes had no personal experience of living in housing conditions or communities of the type that they were designing. The problem of the architect as a middle class professional, out of touch with the interests of the working classes, was one that was realised and raised. Labour's pamphlet Housing and Planning after the war (1943) stated:

The architect of to-day is as competent as at any period in our history to design buildings which, while serving their purpose in the most efficient way, are beautiful and reflect the culture, outlook and spirit of the times. Greater encouragement and help are needed for the architectural profession, and entry thereto by the sons and daughters of working class parents should be facilitated as well as assistance given at the outset of their career.

However, the situation in post-war architectural education changed very little, and R.F. Jordan in a talk in 1950 to the LCC branch of the ABT noted:

that the present system gives a disproportionate advantage to those in a position to afford the high fees of a 'Final exemption' school, where the percentage of passes is high, as against the great majority of those from the lower income groups, taking external examinations with a relatively small chance of eventual qualifications, even after many years of study. The class distinction implicit in this system was strongly criticised.

The architectural profession, with its middle class bias, therefore relied upon the social awareness of its members to voice the interests of the working classes. From the small sample of architects studied who worked in Matthew's new housing division, it was apparent that such a social conscience and awareness relied not so much on class position (as all were middle class) but more importantly upon education and training. L. Escher described the typical public sector architect of the inter-war years as "plain men, grammar school rather than public school<sup>5</sup>", and by so doing implied that as architects they were less competent and creative compared to private architects. However, in the context of the early 1950s when private architectural work was in short supply, local authorities managed to attract a broader range of architects. This meant that local authorities, like the LCC, were staffed with architects who chose to work there because of their social and political interests, as well as architects who went there as it offered an opportunity to experiment with new architectural forms. The two styles developed at the LCC in the early 1950s, the Swedish and Corbusian styles, illustrated these two different approaches. Those architects that designed in the Swedish style were more interested in the social aspects of design, and had generally been to grammar schools, and not been trained at Cambridge University or the Architectural Association. Those architects that designed in the Corbusian style were more interested in the architectural and formal aspects of design, and they had generally been to public schools and been trained at Cambridge University and/or the Architectural

Association. The political and social commitment of architects was therefore not a specifically class based issue, but one concerned more with education and training. The small membership of AASTA and then ABT, compared to that of RIBA, also signifies that the dominant political interests of architects as a group in this period were Conservative. For the majority of architects the debate concerning the new rôle of the state in providing housing for the entire community, as expressed in Bevan's housing policy, must have seemed unintelligible and remote from their own class and political interests.

Both at central and local government level, housing was administered by middle class politicians. Bevan's was a lone voice in stressing class divisions and interests in government debates. The poor quality of the housing debates in the House of Commons illustrated the lack of interest and understanding of what Bevan was attempting to achieve in his housing policy. The class based interests of government were also seen in the coalition government's Housing Manual 1944, which eschewed all the radical and innovative suggestions of the Dudley Report, in favour of promoting the interests of the private builder. These interests were re-introduced after 1951 by the Conservative government, who returned the State's rôle in housing to that of the unprofitable area of slum clearance. The class based interests of party politics therefore continued to dominate housing policy in the post-war years. Unlike health, the rise of the Welfare State Capitalist economy produced only very limited changes in the area of the provision of housing.

Labour's experiment at creating a socialist British state through the means of a Parliamentary democracy was therefore short lived, and one which failed to reduce the class divisions within society. Housing

was both politically and architecturally controlled by the dominant middle class, and save for a few socially aware architects and politicians, the problems of creating socially balanced communities were marginal compared to political interests (eg. Latham, Gibson and Walter's interest in producing the largest possible number of new dwellings) or architectural interests (eg. the Corbusian group's main interest in designing a 'ville radieuse' with Unité look-alikes).

Architectural style and ideology. The influx of Hegelian and Marxist art historical theories into British intellectual circles in the late 1930s were critical for the post-war debates on aesthetics. Both the Hegelian concept of the 'spirit of the age', and the Marxist concept of style representing the interests of a particular class in society, encouraged critics to relate style to ideology. In the context of state housing it helped to define a pre-war image of local authority housing. The pre-war slum clearance schemes, that were designed utilising austere 5-storey blocks arranged around tarmacked courtyards, (eg. Honour Oak Estate, plates 20-22) therefore became associated with pre-war Conservative politics and ideology. This image of a bleak institutionalised form of housing, which was solely for the poorer working classes, thus became a symbol of pre-war inequalities. In post-war aesthetic debates this negative image acted as a powerful reminder of pre-war class divisions. It forced architects to develop new building types and architectural styles which would thus be value free so that they could express the new collectivist ideology that Bevan was attempting to implement in his new socialist housing policies.

The use of style to express a post-war equality had been anticipated in 1942 in RIBA's evidence submitted to the Dudley Committee. The

evidence suggested the need for the development of socially balanced communities and for the use of good design for both state and private housing. This, it claimed, would cover up the ownership of the housing, which before had been made explicit by local authority housing looking like 'dull council houses'.<sup>6</sup> This change in imagery for state housing is clearly seen in Tersons promotional illustration for the Ackroydon Estate (plate 174) for which they were the contractors. The 'modern' (notice the aeroplane flying past) point block set in landscaped grounds contrasts completely with the pre-war Honour Oak Estate image. The point blocks reference is to pre-war middle class flats such as Tecton's Highpoint I and II.

Another text on housing in which the use of architectural style was considered a central aspect for post-war housing was J. Madge's The Rehousing of Britain.<sup>7</sup> Pre-war housing problems (plates 175 and 176) were contrasted to British and foreign housing schemes built by socialist authorities. These included Quarry Hill Estate Leeds (plates 177 and 178), flats in Moscow (plate 179), Gropius's Siemenstadt flats (plate 180), Swedish Co-operative housing at Malmö (plate 181), Karl Marx Hof Vienna (plate 182), and point blocks at Cité de la Muette, Drancy (plate 183). All these represented the most modern and progressive design features of pre-war state housing schemes, and were intended to be used as suitable models for post-war reconstruction. The book was one in a series entitled "Target for Tomorrow - a series of books on post-war planning", and were edited by Sir William Beveridge, Julian Huxley and Sir John Boyd Orr. The series provided intelligent and lucid summaries of the major issues concerning reconstruction, but written from a socialist perspective. Madge's book on housing left the reader little doubt that the most suitable style for reconstruction would be based upon



European Modern Movement ideas. The same conclusion was also shown to be inferred from the County of London Plan and the Greater London Plan, which both used artists' impressions of schemes designed in a Modern style (plates 36, 37, 67 and 68). The general expectation was therefore that the "building of a new Britain which will bring health, comfort, convenience, beauty and happiness in many cases for the first time, into the lives of our people"<sup>8</sup> was to be in a modern style that made a total break with the style and image of pre-war state housing.

However in the case of the LCC's housing work this break with pre-war style was delayed until 1950 when Matthew set up a new housing division. Although Forshaw managed to introduce new planning ideas into the experimental Woodberry Down Estate, he was frustrated in an attempt to create a new architectural style to represent the new rôle for state housing. His team of architects, who had worked at the LCC since before the war, were incapable of developing a new architectural image for the design of the 8-storey blocks (plates 53-60). Instead their derivative and inconsistent results that used elements of Swedish neo-classicism, Art Deco, and Modern Movement styles failed to look new or modern. Walker's housing work which returned to the use of the 5-storey balcony access block was even more regressive. Even the Kingswood Estate (plates 93-98), another large and prestigious scheme, merely applied modern ornament to traditional 4-storey blocks. All the architectural work of the LCC prior to 1950 was therefore completely inadequate in its attempt at creating a new image for housing.

It was not until 1950, when the new architects brought in by Matthew started work on the first Wandsworth schemes, that any architectural progress was made. The two new images that were used were those as

defined by the Swedish and Corbusian paradigms. The contrast between the interest of these two images can be seen in two LCC photographs (plates 184 and 185). The Swedish paradigm as represented by the Forest Estate photograph emphasises the domestic quality of the environment and the relationship between the home, the family and the community. These factors are given greater priority over architectural or formal interests. In contrast the Alton West Estate photograph emphasises purely architectural and formal factors. The concepts of home, family and community are subsumed to those of geometric order and spectacular architectural effects. These two styles or images therefore have completely different attitudes towards their future residents, which can be illustrated by looking at the two images of men that relate to these two styles. The Quadrant Estate, which was designed using the premises of the Swedish paradigm, had a statue by S. Charoux, called the 'Neighbours' (plate 186). This was an image of two heavily characterised working men, leaning together suggesting their strength and solidarity. Thus not only their own individual identity was expressed, but also their collective identity. The Alton West Estate based on the Corbusian paradigm used the Modulor scale for all the dimensions of the blocks and layout. This scale developed by Le Corbusier was based on the height of an average man. This average man was represented on the Unité d'Habitation, Marseille, as a bas relief of a 'Modulor man' (plate 187). This image, taken up by the Alton West design team was based upon an abstract definition of an ideal man. Humanity was therefore reduced to a conceptualised and depersonalised mathematical construct of a man. These two approaches to architectural style and environment can be summarised as a Swedish style that was empirically based and a Corbusian style that was idealistically based. Both styles when translated into buildings and

environments controlled human behaviour, but each imposed different conditions which related to their definition of the individual and the individual's rôle within a collective society.

However both of these options were unacceptable for a new style for the reconstruction of a Socialist Britain. The Swedish style (apart from the Alton East Estate) was architecturally undistinguished and too understated, and the Corbusian style was too rigorous and failed to create a suitable environment for social interaction. However the main difficulty for these two styles being interpreted as a new socialist style was that they appeared too late. By the time these estates were completed in the mid to late 1950s, the idea of a socialist housing policy in which differences of class or income group were to be disguised by a unifying socialist architectural style, had been completely abandoned. None of these schemes were intended to have a social mix, and were aimed only at the lower income groups or working classes. Therefore despite the new stylistic content of the LCC's work from 1950 onwards, it was not accompanied by political or ideological changes. The Swedish and Corbusian paradigms that had been defined during the war and immediate post-war period had therefore, in the case of LCC housing, been stripped of their political and ideological meanings, and had become just another aesthetic variant on the pre-war 5-storey tenement block. The new LCC housing estates might have looked either cosy and domestic, or modern and spectacular, but these formal changes merely disguised the fact that no progress had been made towards the levelling out of society or the erosion of class divisions and distinctions. Architectural style and form were still used to express and signify class position.

(iii) Overview. The aim of the research was to cover a wide area of

material to include architectural issues; such as the status and rôle of the public architect, the development of architectural theory, the relationship between architecture and ideology, and the development of new architectural styles, and also political issues; such as the development of central government policy, the control of housing at the local authority level, and relationship of housing to broader social and political issues. This breadth of treatment allowed a wider perspective than merely an architectural historical one to be developed. The main interest was to see how effective the 1945 - 1951 Labour government's attempt at introducing a socialist housing policy had been. The research has shown that despite the elaborate rhetoric of Bevan, which proclaimed the rise of a new era in state housing, very little progress was made towards achieving a more socially balanced society. The use of the concept of the 'mixed development' in practice became too readily merely an architectural mix. In the period when the post-war Labour government held office, the LCC, Britain's largest public authority, built no socially balanced communities in London, and on its out-county developments achieved limited success at integrating lower and higher income groups within the same estate.

The LCC as London's main housing authority failed to implement any of the radical proposals of the two London plans, and continued to follow pre-war policies until as late as 1950. It was therefore not a progressive housing authority, either in terms of planning or architectural content. The rôle of the architect within these two structures of central and local government has therefore to be seen as one limited to that of a professional advisor, whose advice could be totally ignored if it conflicted with the political interests of those in power.

The case of Forshaw, both as chief architectural advisor to the LCC and to the Ministry of Health, illustrated this position. Forshaw's attempts at the LCC of introducing the socialist based County of London Plan's proposals were completely blocked by Council members who considered them too idealistic and impractical. This was both an ideological and economic conflict. The attitude towards housing of Latham, Gibson and Walker represented a pre-war ideology in which architectural, planning, and social factors were seen as marginal ones compared to the need to increase the number of LCC dwellings. This combined with the limited changes brought in by Bevan in the subsidy system for financing state housing, constantly placed the cost of innovatory ideas outside the budget allowed by the Finance committee. Forshaw's rôle at the LCC was therefore extremely limited by the power of the Council and its Housing and Finance committees. His advice and recommendations were easily ignored and his rôle as chief architectural advisor to the Council on their housing work was eventually removed from him. In his position at the Ministry of Health he became Bevan's chief advisor on housing policy. As Bevan was sympathetic to the County of London Plan's proposals, Forshaw had greater success than at the LCC. The 1946 Housing Manual and the 1949 Housing Act testify to the acceptance of Forshaw's mixed development concept. However after 1951, the change in government meant that Forshaw's socialist housing theories were not followed or developed further. Instead they were gradually removed so that by the 1956 Housing Act no traces of a socialist housing strategy remained. Thus Forshaw, one of the leading authorities on planning and architectural matters, had not managed to wield any personal power to help promote his own political and architectural ideas. In his rôle as architect he was therefore a passive advisor within the housing

debates and not an active agent who could promote or force change.

The attempt by architects to participate in political debates concerned with architecture were followed in the analysis of the development of the policies of AASTA and then ABT. Their attempts to persuade architects to see themselves, not as professionals, but as workers involved in Trade Union activity and the Labour Movement, were unsuccessful. Most architects remained outside these debates and were more concerned with the problems of private practice. Thus by failing to form a democratic and representative body to advance both the interests of architects and of architecture, the architectural profession had no political mouthpiece or power, and was therefore easily ignored.

The one instance of the whole profession becoming involved in the housing debate was the AJ's campaign which criticised the quality of the housing work of the LCC in 1949. This generated a considerable amount of criticism, however it all focused upon design matters rather than the social or political implications of the LCC's housing. The profession therefore showed itself to be disinterested in the broader political aspects of its work.

The rôle of the architect in post-war state housing was therefore limited to that of professional advisor for matters relating to design and planning. The image of the frontispiece of this thesis of the 'Architect of today [who] plans in a world of social economic and cultural transition' rather overstates the case. The social, economic and cultural transitions were not as dramatic as believed, and the determined look of the young architect who menacingly wields a set square in his right hand in front of masterplan for a new planned world, really only corresponded to a very small minority of socially committed

architects. Even for these, the dream of a post-war Britain reconstructed on socialist principles (a belief that was optimistically held in the 1940s) was by the mid 1950s completely shattered. The brave new world of the British Welfare State was soon perceived to be merely a minor change from the pre-war capitalist state, with housing, along with health care, being used as a panacea to ward off social and political unrest.

## NOTES AND REFERENCES

### Preface

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2. Ibid.

### Introduction

1. N. Hadjinicolaou, Art History and Class Struggle (London, Pluto 1978, original French edition 1973).
2. J. Wolff, The Social Production of Art, (London, MacMillan 1981).
3. C. Mouffe, 'Hegemony and Ideology in Gramsci', in T. Bennett et al, editors, Culture, Ideology and Social Process: A reader (The Open University 1981), pp.219-234.
4. T. Eagleton, Criticism and Ideology (London, NLB 1976, Verso Edition 1978).
5. A quote taken from E. Shils, 'An age of embarrassment', Encounter (October 1978) and quoted by L. Esher, A Broken Wave, the rebuilding of England 1940-1980 (London, Penguin Books, 1981), p.51.
6. R. Banham, 'The New Brutalism', AR, vol.122, (December 1955), pp.355-359, and 'Revenge of the Picturesque: English Architectural Polemics, 1945-65', pp.265-273, in J. Summerson, ed. Concerning Architecture (London: Allen Lane, 1969).
7. R. Furneaux Jordan, 'LCC: New standards in official architecture', AR, vol.120, (November 1956), pp.303-324.
8. Ibid., p.324.



## Section 1.1

1. J. Summerson, 'The Mischievous Analogy', in Heavenly Mansions and other essays on architecture (London, Cresset Press, 1949), p.197.
2. Wells Coates 'Unit One', 1933, quoted in A. Jackson, The Politics of Architecture: a history of Modern Architecture in Britain (London Architectural Press, 1970), p.63. See also quotes by Fry, p.65 (Chermayeff and J.M. Richards, p.67).
3. Ibid., Chermayeff quote p.67.
4. E. Carter, Politics and Architecture, AR, vol.166 (November 1979) pp.324-325.
5. J. Summerson, 'Bread and Butter Architecture', Horizon VI, 1942, p.235.
6. AASTA, History of Architects - a few notes addressed to architects in salaried employment, and to students of English architectural politics of the period 1919-1935 (London, May 1935) p.1.
7. Ibid.
8. E. Carter, Politics and Architecture, op.cit.
9. Reported in RIBA Journal, vol.42 (8 June 1935) p.26.
10. L. Escher, A Broken Wave - The rebuilding of England 1940-80 (London, Allen Lane, 1981) p.26.
11. J. Summerson, 'Bread and Butter Architecture', op.cit., p.240. The phrase 'stale chocolate' is quoted by Summerson from G. Rendel's RIBA presidential talk in 1938, where he described departmental architecture in this way. 'Stinking rubbish' is Summerson's own description for some pre-war official architecture, p. 240.
12. Ibid., p.234. See the two post-war career possibilities as outlined by M.E. Taylor in a letter to the Architect and Building News, vol.195 (11 February 1949) pp.124-125, where he makes the following distinctions: Public office career for job security but low, if regular, salary. Private office career for a potentially larger salary and the advantages of being your own boss. See also an anonymous article (probably written by C. Penn) 'Beginnings', The Architect and Building News (21st October 1938) pp. 67-68 which also stresses the economic attractions of salaried employment.
13. J. Summerson, 'Bread and Butter Architecture', op.cit., p.240. Summerson uses this argument.
14. F.R.S. Yorke and G. Stephenson, 'Letter', RIBA Journal, vol.49 (March 1942) p.79. Their letter puts the case that the RIBA Council was no longer representative of the members as no election had been held since 1939. They therefore urged the council to hold elections in 1942.

15. RIBA Journal, vol.51 (July 1944) pp.217-218. The election results were listed. F.R.S. Yorke and C. Penn were the two 'Modernists' elected onto the Council.
16. A. Jackson, 'The Politics of Architecture', op.cit.
17. RIBA Journal, vol.53 (December 1946) p.63.
18. RIBA Journal, vol.48 (December 1941) p.21.
19. Ibid., p.23.
20. RIBA Journal, vol.50 (July 1943) pp.206-209.
21. J. Summerson, 'Bread and Butter Architecture', op.cit., p.237. See also E.J. Carter, 'The case for a learned Society', RIBA Journal, vol. 45 (10 January 1938) pp. 217-235. Summerson picks up on several of Carter's themes, especially the need for RIBA to serve the community's interests and to be more informed as regards new techniques and building materials.
22. Keystone (April 1937) p.18.
23. Ibid.
24. J. Summerson, 'Bread and Butter Architecture', op.cit., p.236.
25. Keystone (March 1944) p.6.
26. Keystone (October 1945) p.7.
27. Keystone (July-August 1945) p.6.
28. Keystone (January 1947).
29. Keystone (August-September 1954) pp.52-53.
30. Keystone (November 1949) p.177.
31. Keystone (October 1950) pp. 36-37.
32. Keystone (July-August 1952) p.57.
33. 'Salaried Architects - a proposal for a new salary scale', AJ, vol.118 (16 July 1953) pp.72-73.
34. AJ, vol.118 (30 July 1953) pp.130-131.
35. See R. Fox, 'The Fight of Communism on the Front of Culture', Daily Worker (11 September 1935). I am indebted to Steve Parsons for information regarding Communist Party members and the Architectural profession, which is taken from his doctoral research 'Professionals in the CPGB', to be presented to Warwick University.
36. Information concerning architects and C.P. activity was suggested by K. Campbell, in an interview on 14th June 1983. There is also little or no published secondary source material dealing with this specific area

of communist activity. I am indebted to S. Parsons for the use of his research. Op.cit.

37. The Builder, vol.179 (1 December 1950) pp.521, 522, 537.

38. The Builder, vol.179 (1 December 1950) pp.571-572, and (8 December 1950), p.592.

39. The Builder, vol. 179 (1 December 1950) pp.571-572. Letter from S. Loweth.

40. S. Parsons, op.cit.

41. The Builder, vol.179 (8 December 1950) p.592.

42. R. Banham, 'The New Brutalism', AR, vol.122 (December 1955) pp.355-359.

43. See E.H. Gombrich, In search of Cultural History (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969).

44. J.M. Richards, Introduction to Modern Architecture (Harmondsworth: 1940) p.9.

45. Ibid., p.19.

46. J. Summerson, 'The mischievous Analogy', op.cit., p.205. See also Summerson's article 'The hollow victory, 1932-1972', RIBA Journal, vol.83 (December 1976) pp.494-495, where he finds the naive optimism of these early articles embarrassing.

47. Ibid., p.209.

48. J. Summerson, 'The New Groundwork of Architecture', in A.F. Scott, Modern Essays 1939-41 (London: MacMillan 1942) p.27.

49. Ibid., p.210.

50. This is a summary of Summerson's argument from J. Summerson, 'The Mischievous analogy', op.cit.

51. F. Antal, Florentine painting and its Social Background (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., 1948). I use Antal as the most important example of this Marxist art historical tradition of the 1930s in London, but do not necessarily suggest direct links between him and the subsequent writers who are mentioned as also using this methodology.

52. Contrast to J. Summerson, quoted in footnote 48, where he disagreed with the concept that great men are the product of their age and environment.

53. A. Boyd, 'a review of the symposium - The Kind of Architecture we want in Britain. Organised by the Architecture and Planning Group of the Society for Cultural Relations with the USSR, March 17th 1949'. Keystone (May-June 1949) p.96. Papers were given by Prof. W.G. Holford, P. Shephard, A. Ling and Wells Coates.

54. A. Boyd and C. Penn, eds., Homes for the People (London: Paul Elek, 1946).
55. Ibid., pp.132-135.
56. Ibid.
57. A. Ling, 'Soviet Architecture - The Present Phase', The Architect and Building News, vol.160 (Part I, 6 October, 1939) p.12.
58. Ibid., (Part III, 20 October, 1939) p.13.
59. The Builder, vol.179 (6 December 1950) p.592. Quoted from I. Menzies letter to the editor complaining of the political activities of the Architectural Association School of Architecture.
60. R. Banham, 'Revenge of the Picturesque: English Architectural Polemics, 1945-65', in J. Summerson, ed. Concerning Architecture (London: Allen Lane, 1968).
61. R. Banham, 'The New Brutalism', AR, vol.118 (December 1955) pp.355-359.
62. Ibid., p.356.
63. Ibid.
64. Ibid.
65. Ibid., p.355.
66. Even the work of Pugin was reconsidered as a suitable example for a socialist architecture, although Pugin's Catholicism had first to be transformed into a Socialist morality. See R.F. Jordan's, 'Pugin - Man of Faith', Observer (14 September 1952).
67. Keystone (February 1937) p.5. The exhibition that was advertised was a British Artists Congress Exhibition 'William Morris and Us - art and social questions'.
68. William Morris, quoted in P. Meier, William Morris the Marxist Dreamer (Harvester, 1978) p.399.
69. William Morris, 'Gothic Architecture', quoted in G.D.H. Cole, ed., William Morris (Nonesuch 1934) p.485.
70. R. Banham, 'The New Brutalism', op.cit. p.355.
71. Both Gordon Cullen's 'Townscape' articles in the AR, and J.M. Richards, The Castles on the Ground, the anatomy of Suburbia (London: Architectural Press, 1946) reconsidered the relationship between the individual and their environment. See also J. Summerson's review of Richards' book, 'The Soul of Suburbia', AR, vol. 101 (May 1947) pp. 187-188. Summerson points out the humanistic bias of Richards' provocative analysis of middle class suburbia: "It is not so much a study of architecture as a study of human values. ...He does succeed

quite wonderfully, in defining values which have got overlaid in the welter of those 'progressive' ideas of which we have become the complacent slaves. He sees that the suburb - with its houses, its lawns, its manners and customs, its atmosphere - is something real and should not, probably cannot, be plan<sup>ed</sup> away".

72. See R. Banham, 'The Revenge of the Picturesque', op.cit.
73. J. Summerson, 'The New Groundwork of Architecture', op. cit., p.21.
74. J.M. Richards, Introduction to Modern architecture, op.cit., p.9.
75. J. Summerson, 'The Poetry of Le Corbusier', The Architect and Building News, vol.162 (5 April 1940) pp.4-6.
76. Ibid., p.6.
77. Ibid.
78. L. Brett, 'The Space Machine - an evaluation of the recent work by Le Corbusier', AR, vol.102-103, (November 1947) pp.147-150.
79. Ibid., p.147.
80. Ibid., p.150.
81. C. Rowe, 'The Mathematics of the Ideal Villa, Palladio and Le Corbusier compared', AR, vol.101 (March 1947) pp.101-104.
82. M.C. McLeod, 'Urbanism and Utopia - Le Corbusier from Regional Syndicalism to Vichy', unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Princeton University, 1985.
83. W. Boesiger, Le Corbusier, Oeuvre complète 1938-1946 (Zurich: Les Editions d'Architecture Erlenbach, 1946) p.8.
84. See W. Boesiger, Le Corbusier, Oeuvre complète 1938-1946, op.cit., and, Le Corbusier, Le Modulor (Paris 1951, trans. English, Faber and Faber Ltd., 1954).
85. AJ, vol.107 (8 January 1948) pp.35-36. Summary of the lecture given by Le Corbusier at the Architectural Association on 18th December 1947, on 'The Golden Section'.
86. This award and speech coincided with the start of work on Alton West estate. The presence of Le Corbusier in London discussing the Unité was yet more encouragement for the young architects at the LCC sympathetic to Le Corbusier's ideas to try them out for themselves.
87. 'The Royal Gold Medalist 1953, presentation to M. Le Corbusier at the RIBA', The Builder, vol.184 (10 April 1953) pp.556-557.
88. Ibid., p.556.
89. See A. Forty, 'Le Corbusier's British Reputation', in Le Corbusier

Architect of the Century (London: Arts Council of Great Britain 1987) pp. 35-41, for a discussion of the acceptance of Le Corbusier's ideas on architectural determinism by the British architectural profession, especially p. 41.

90. F.J. Osborn, 'Concerning Le Corbusier', The Town and Country Planning Journal, vol.20 (1950), Part I, pp.311-316, and Part II pp.359-363.

91. Prof. W.G. Holford, 'Swedish Architects and Architecture Today', RIBA Journal, vol.50 (January 1943) pp.58-61.

92. 'Swedish Number', AR, vol.154 (September 1943).

93. 'ABT Swedish Tour - where we went and what we saw', Keystone (October 1947) p.182.

94. T.P. Jacobson, S. Silow, eds., Ten Lectures on Swedish Architecture (SAR - National Association of Swedish Architects, 1949, trans. W. Cameron).

95. SAR., Swedish Housing of the Forties (SAR, 1950).

96. G.E. Kidder Smith, Sweden Builds (first pub. New York and Stockholm 1950, enlarged edition London: Architectural Press, 1957).

97. B. Hultén, Building modern Sweden (London: Penguin Books, 1951).

98. Ibid.

99. SAR. and Swedish Institute for Cultural Relations, Modern Swedish Architecture (The Building Centre, 1952).

100. Keystone (October 1947) p.182.

101. The architects in the LCC Housing Department under Matthew and Martin, who were committed to Socialist Realist ideas, therefore found it difficult to apply these ideas to their designs.

102. Quote by K. Campbell, taken from S. Parsons doctoral research, 'Professionals in the CPGB', op.cit.

103. AR, vol.154 (September 1943) pp.59-58.

104. Ibid., p.80.

105. Ibid., p.59.

106. Ibid., p.76, membership of the Stockholm housing co-operative H.S.B.  
was: 60% manual workers  
24% shop assistants  
10% clerical workers  
6% professional workers

107. Ibid.

108. 'The New Empiricism, Sweden's Latest style', AR, vol.101 (June 1947) pp.199-207.
109. Ibid., p.200.
110. Ibid., p.199.
111. 'The New Empiricism', AR, vol.103 (January 1948) pp.9-12.
112. R. Byron, B. Lubetkin, 'The Russian Scene', AR, vol.71 (May 1932) pp.173-214.
113. 'The Russian Scene', AR op.cit. p.173.
114. RIBA Journal, vol.48 (June 1941) p.149. In the same issue there appeared an article 'Architecture in the USSR' pp.155-158, probably written by A. Ling. The article introduces RIBA Journal readers to Soviet Architecture and the main arguments of Socialist Realism.
115. J. Forshaw, R.C. Bevan, 'Russian Architecture and Building 1955', RIBA Journal, vol.63 (March 1956) pp.182-189.
116. Keystone (October 1945) p.16. The lecture was by Dr. F. Klingender on 'socialist realism in Soviet Architecture'.
117. Society for the Cultural relations with the USSR (hereafter SCR), Architecture and Building technique in the USSR - a symposium (London: Caledonian Press Ltd., 1954).
118. Keystone (March 1949) p.10.
119. See RIBA Journal, vol.55 (February 1948) pp.149-152 and (March 1948) pp.218-221.
120. S. and B. Webb, Soviet Communism: A New Civilisation? 2 vols. (London: Labour Party, 1935).
121. W. Gallacher, M.P., The case for Communism (London, Penguin, 1949).
122. H.J. Laski, Faith, Reason and Civilisation, an essay in Historical analysis (London, Victor Gollanz Ltd. Left Book Club ed., 1944).
123. See RIBA Journal, vol.51 (December 1944) pp.31-32.
124. A.G. Ling, 'Soviet Architecture the present Phase', op.cit.
125. A.G. Ling, Planning and Building in the USSR (London: Bantam Books, 1943).
126. Ibid., p.10.
127. Ibid., p.12.
128. Ibid., p.13.
129. Ibid., p.14.

130. See A.G. Ling: 'Soviet Architecture, the present Phase', op.cit.

'Architecture in the USSR' op.cit., and probably by Ling.

E.J. Carter, 'Soviet Architecture To-day', AR, vol.92 (November 1942) pp.107-114.

F. Lloyd Wright, 'Architecture and Life in USSR', Architectural Record (N.Y.), vol.82 (October 1937) pp.58-96.

and 'Reconstruction in the USSR', AR vol.101 (May 1947) pp.177-184.

131. E.J. Carter, 'Soviet Architecture Today', op.cit., p.107.

132. Ibid., p.108.

133. In all the articles on Socialist Realism this uncritical idea that the return to classicism was generated by the 'people' rather than by Stalin's Official policy is accepted. Whether this was in fact the case or not, is not important for this discussion. What is important is that observers in Britain in the 1940s, who were pro Russia, saw, or wanted to see it, in this way.

134. E.J. Carter, 'Soviet Architecture Today', op.cit. p.111.

135. Ibid.

136. Ibid., p.108. Reference is made in this article to the criticism that Russia's Socialist Realism was like Hitler's Nazi architecture or some British Municipal architecture. Carter uses the argument of the arbitrary meaning of 'style', which is dependent upon context, to answer these criticisms.

137. 'Reconstruction in the USSR', AR, vol. 101 (May 1947) p. 184.

138. Architectural Design, vol.29 (January 1959) pp.2-6.



## Section 1.2

1. M. Bowley, Housing and the State, 1919-44 (London, Allen and Unwin, 1945).
  2. Ibid, p.182.
  3. See also H. Quigley and I. Goldie, Housing and Slum Clearance in London (London, 1934), for an earlier and more restricted critique of State Housing.
  4. M. Bowley, op.cit. p.183.
  5. Bowley's findings suggested that the inter-war years subsidy system had generally failed to provide adequate housing at low rents for the working classes. In the 'Second Experiment' Local Authorities had failed to provide general-needs accommodation at rents that the semi- and unskilled workers could afford and private enterprise had also given priority to better off families, as few small houses to let at low rents were built (pp.175-179).
- Bowley also observed that the relatively prosperous late 1930s had the least ambitious programme, as well as the least opposition from the public, thus concluding that it needed "the impact of war-time housing discomforts on the artisan and middle classes to evoke real interest in housing questions" (p.185). Bowley's suggestion for future policy considered the only alternative to be a return to a general replacement policy, shelved since 1923, which "could logically be interpreted as State responsibility for maintaining a modern standard of housing for every family" (p.204). Such a programme would involve an assessment of the general economic and social problems affecting housing policy (in which she included National Planning, planning controls and State intervention in land ownership and employment). Bowley's book therefore offered a detailed overview and critique of state housing in Britain. Despite its attempt at political neutrality, it nonetheless favoured greater State intervention and control in the supply of housing. As this supply was to be for 'every family' and not just the low income groups, it constituted in the context of the early 1940s a very radical proposal which was to form the basis of the 1945 Labour Governments Housing policy.
6. M. Bowley, op.cit. p.4. Underlining mine.
  7. See J.R. Short, The Post-war experience: Housing in Britain (London: Methuen, 1982) pp.31-41. Especially table 2.2.
  8. See M. Swenarton, Homes fit for Heroes (London: Heinemann Educational Books, 1981), especially his conclusions pp.189-196.
  9. Ministry of Health, About Housing (HMSO so.code No.32-346, 1939).
  10. Viscount Cecil, quoted in J.R. Short, op.cit. p.40.
  11. Ministry of Health, About Housing, op.cit. p.11.

12. Ibid.
13. Ministry of Health, Design of Dwellings: report of the Design of Dwellings sub-committee of the central Housing Advisory Committee appointed by the Minister of Health and a report of the study group of the Ministry of Town and Country Planning on site planning and layout in relation to housing. (HMSO so.code No.32-362, 1944). Hereafter referred to as the Dudley Report.
14. Ibid., p.8. Underlining mine.
15. Ibid.
16. Ibid., p.9. Except that they added 'we contemplate that in the post-war Housing programme the proportion of houses built by Local Authorities may be larger...'.  
  
17. Ibid., p.10.
18. Ibid., pp.17-18.
19. Ibid., p.8.
20. Ibid., p.55.
21. See also the discussion of 'neighbourhood units' in the County of London Plan (hereafter CLP). These two reports, the Dudley Report and the CLP, are exactly contemporary with each other and share many professional links and common interests.
22. Ministry of Health, Dudley report, op.cit. p.61.
23. A pre-war example of interest in the concept of community life on Local Authority estates was made in the housing memorandum from the Department of Health for Scotland, Community Life in New Housing Schemes (memo No.88, 1936). This report was theoretically less sophisticated and looked at shops, club rooms and recreation areas. It recommended the need to "secure these facilities for community life, without which the mental, social and physical welfare of the population of new housing schemes cannot be fully secured".  
  
Also see the work of the sociologist Ruth Glass, eg. A warning to the Planners - the story of Honouroak Estate, The National House Builder, vol. 5-6 (September 1945), pp.25-29.
24. Ministry of Health, Dudley Report, op.cit. p.13.
25. Ministry of Health, and Ministry of Works, Housing Manual 1944 (HMSO so.code No.70-454) p.9, stated "the recommendations made in the [Dudley] report form the basis of much of the present manual".
26. Ibid., see fig.7, fig.10, fig.13 and photograph on p.50.
27. Government Policy and Organisation for carrying it into effect (cmd.6609), Parliamentary Papers (1944-45), x. 247.

28. Hansard, Parliamentary Debates (hereafter Parl. Deb.), 5th ser., vol.408, col.1100 (23 March 1945).
29. Ibid., col.1244.
30. Ibid., col.1169. That is, a similar outlook on the housing crisis as that of 1918, where 'Reform or Revolution' were considered to be the alternatives.
31. Ibid., col.1027.
32. Ibid., col.1208.
33. Hansard, Parl.Deb., 5th ser., vol.411, cols.1107-1208 (7 June 1945), Supply Committee: Housing.
34. Ibid., col.1110.
35. National Union of Conservative and Constitution Association. Central Committee on Post-war Reconstruction, Looking Ahead: A policy for Housing in England & Wales (London, March 1944). See the section on 'Housing awaits National policy'.
36. National Union of Conservative and Constitution Association, General Election 1945, Notes for Speakers and Workers (London, Conservative central Office, June 1945).
37. The sub-committee was dominated by private builders and surveyors, including J.W. Laing, the director of John Laing and Son Ltd., Sir H.R. Selley Master Builder and past chairman of the LCC Housing Committee. Technical advisers to the committee included Sir H. Bellman, chairman of the Abbey National Building Society.
38. National Union of Conservative & Constitution Association. The interim report: Looking Ahead. Foundation for housing: being an interim report of the Conservative sub-committee on Housing (London, Central Committee on Post-war Reconstruction, March 1944). The final report: Looking ahead. A policy for Housing in England and Wales - being a report of the Conservative Housing sub-committee (London, Conservative and Unionist Party Organisation, January 1945).
39. Ibid., interim report, p.12. 'elevating the poor' quote was taken from a quote by Charles Dickens of the 1850s.
40. Ibid. See section 'Basis of Policy', where the two major problems of a reduction in population and an industrial decline are cited as the factors in danger of reducing Britain to a third class power.
41. Ibid., final report.
42. Ibid.
43. National Union of Conservative and Constitution Association, General Election 1945, Notes..., op.cit.
44. The Labour Party, The old World and the New Society: a report on the

problems of war and peace Reconstruction, issued by the National Executive Committee for discussion prior to the Annual Conference May 25-28 1942 (London, Labour Party, 1942).

45. Ibid.

46. Ibid.

47. The Labour Party, Housing and planning after the war: The Labour Partys' Post-war Policy (London, Labour Party, 1943).

48. Ibid.

49. The Labour Party, Let us Face the Future, a declaration of Labour Policy for the consideration of the Nation (London, Labour Party, April 1945).

50. This polarisation between Capitalism and Socialism which the electorate faced, was neatly summarised by the Liberal party, in its 1948 Programme for Britain. This document stated that "under Conservative Governments there is lethargy, a slackening of social progress and the preservation of privilege. The Socialists do not desire a Liberal society; they seek to establish a socialist Commonwealth in which, in the words of their constitution 'there would be the common ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange'. This is no different in its final form from that type of society which exists in Russia to-day... under both Socialism and Communism, the state is supreme, the individual is disregarded".

51. The Labour party, Let us Face the Future, op.cit.

52. See footnote 6 for M. Bowley's comment on the links between Housing policy and Party Politics.

53. R. Milliband, Parliamentary Socialism - a study in the politics of of Labour 2nd edition (London, Merlin Press, 1972) p.278. Miliband argues that Let us Face the Future was a 'mild and circumspect document, which marked no advance on 'Labours Immediate Programme' of 1937, and made few concessions to the Labour Left.

54. Ibid., p.284. H. Laski describing the election at the 1945 Labour Conference.

55. Ibid., p.286.

56. M. Foot, Aneurin Bevan, Vol.I 1897-1945 (London, MacGibbon and Kee, 1962) p.510. Foot suggests Attlee was encouraged to select Bevan by both Bevin and the pressure of the support given to Bevan by the constituency party delegates at the 1944 Conference.

57. M. Foot, Aneurin Bevan, Vol.II 1945-1960 (London, Granada, 1973, reprint edition 1982) p.22.

58. A. Bevan, In Place of Fear (London, Heinemann, 1952) p.5.

59. R. Milliband, Parliamentary Socialism, op.cit., p.244. Hugh Daltons

'Practical Socialism for Britain' was a strong influence for the Fabian tradition in the Labour Party.

60. Hansard, Parl.Deb., 5th ser., vol.414, cols.1206-1321 (17 October 1945).
61. Ibid., cols.1216-1217.
62. Ibid., col.1222.
63. Ibid., col.1223.
64. Ibid., col.1224.
65. Ibid., col.1241.
66. Ibid., col.1257.
67. Ibid., cols.1309-1310.
68. Ibid., cols.1252-1253.
69. Hansard, Parl.Deb., 5th ser., vol.420, cols.341 (March 1946). Housing Bill 1946, 2nd Reading.
70. Hansard, Parl.Deb., 5th ser., vol.421, cols.227 (26 March 1946). Housing (Financial Provisions) Bill committee.
71. Ibid., cols.667 (28 March 1946). 3rd reading, Housing (Financial and Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill.
72. Ibid., col.233.
73. Ibid., col.676.
74. See the further debates of:  
30th July 1946 in Hansard, Parl.Deb., 5th ser., vol.426, col.804-910.  
21st October 1946 in Hansard, Parl.Deb., 5th ser., vol.427, cols.1327-1440.  
28th July 1947 in Hansard, Parl.Deb., 5th ser., vol.441, cols.45-160.
75. Bevan, in a characteristic attack on the partiality of the press said, "Why should we who are responsible for clearing up the muddle of a century of Capitalism allow ourselves to be scared by headlines in the press, the most prostituted press in the world, most of it owned by a gang of millionaires?". Quoted in M. Foot, Aneurin Bevan Vol.II, op.cit. p.232. See also p.82 for an account of the Tory attack on Bevan's policy.
76. Hansard, Parl.Deb., 5th ser., vol.441, col.74 (28 July 1947).
77. Ministry of Health, Housing Progress - Description of exhibit at the of exhibit at the Ideal Home Exhibition, Olympia 1948.
78. Ibid.

79. Hansard, Parl.Deb., 5th ser., vol.462, cols.2121 (16 March).
80. Ibid., col.2125.
81. Ibid., col.2171.
82. Ibid., col.2148. From a speech by Jennie Lee, Bevan's wife.
83. Ibid., col.2126.
84. Ibid., col.2127.
85. Hansard, Parl.Deb., 5th ser., vol.472, cols.764 (13 March 1950), Debate on the Address - Amendment.
86. Ibid., col.861.
87. Ministry of Health, Housing Manual 1949 (HMSO so.code No.32-391) p.11.
88. Ibid., p.136. See figs.159 and 162.
89. Or rather become again: the inter-war years had shown the Conservatives the importance Housing had for the electorate. For example the cut in the Wheatley subsidy in 1928 had on the 1929 General Election, where the Conservatives were defeated.
90. Quoted in J.R. Short, The Post-war experience, op.cit. p.47.
91. See Bevan's caustic account of the way in which this decision was reached on purely emotive grounds, relying on firm analysis of the possibility of achieving such a figure, in the debate in the House of Commons on the King's Address, Hansard, Parl.Deb., 5th ser., vol.480, cols.6338-6339 (6 November 1950). The Kings Address, an Amendment (Housing).
92. Ibid., cols.605. Stated by Mr. Marples MP.
93. Ibid., col.691.
94. Figures for new houses under Bevan's policy were:  
1946: 55,400  
1947: 139,690  
1948: 227,616  
1949: 217,000  
Quoted in M. Foot, Aneurin Bevan Vol.II, op.cit., p.84.
95. E. Hughes, Macmillan - Portrait of a Politician (London, Allen and Unwin, 1962)p.80.
96. Ibid. The average area of a 3 bedroomed house in 1951 was 1000 sq.ft., and in 1952 950 sq.ft.
97. Ibid., p.82.
98. Ibid. Hughes observes that "if Macmillan had not become a

successful politician he certainly would have made his living as an advertising agent".

99. Ministry of Housing and Local Government Housing the next Step, cmd.8996, vol.xxxvi, p.1., November 1953.

100. See footnote 9.

101. Ministry of Housing and Local Government, Housing the Next Step, op.cit.

102. Ibid.

103. Ibid.

104. Hansard, Parl.Deb., 5th ser., vol.546, col.793 (17 November 1955). Mr. D. Sandys, Minister of Housing and Local Government.

### Section 1.3

1. Greater London Records Office, London (hereafter GLRO), Housing and Public Health Committee (hereafter H&PH Com.), minutes 1945-46, vol.9, 17th July 1946.
2. GLRO, Housing Committee (hereafter H Com.), minutes 1949, vol.12, 3rd October.
3. GLRO, H Com., minutes 1951, vol.14, 25th April.
4. GLRO, LCC minutes 1939, 28th March, pp.247-248.
5. GLRO, LCC minutes 1939, 28th March, pp.290-291.
6. GLRO, LCC minutes 1939, 27th June, p.559.
7. See AJ, 12th and 19th July 1934. Other examples included the work under L.H. Keay, Director of Housing at Liverpool, and also the Quarry Hill scheme by R.A.H. Livett, Director of Housing at Leeds.
8. GLRO, H&PH Com., minutes 1945-46, vol.9, 7th November 1945.
9. Ibid. The subject of the Council's Organisation of Housing should have been discussed at the earlier meeting of 24th October 1945. However the report from the Civil Defence and General Purposes Committee (hereafter CD&GP Com.) does not appear to have been ready and was not presented.
10. GLRO, H&PH Com., minutes 1945-46, vol.9, 7th November 1945. The CD&GP Com. report HP.521, of 5th November 1945 was presented.
11. GLRO, CD&GP Com., presented papers Oct-Dec 1945, vol.31. These reports were requested by the CD&GP Com. on 31st July 1945.
12. GLRO, H&PH Com., minutes 1945-46, vol.9, 14th November 1945. The Housing Committee members present at the Special Meeting of 14th November 1945 were:

Mr. C.W. Gibson JP. MP.  
Chairman of the Committee

Berry, H. MI Mech.E. A.I. Struct.E. MP.  
Bonney, W.C. JP.  
Burton, G.C.  
Dove, A.N. JP.  
Fremantle, J. The Hon.  
Guy, W.H. JP.  
Hare, J. Lieut-Col. The Hon. MP.  
Hayes, G.E.  
Hornby, Miss B.L.  
Martin, E.P. JP.  
Owen, W.R. JP.  
Rye, F. CBE.  
Warwick, A.C. JP.



Winterton, The Countess.

13. The suggestion of appointing an outside leader of the new Housing Department was rejected as a viable alternative (see GLRO, LCC minutes 1943-45, 18th December, p.1178). It was stated that this had been tried in 1919 and had been found not to be effective.

14. GLRO, H&PH Com., minutes 1945-46, vol.9, 14th November 1945.

15. GLRO, LCC minutes 1945, 18th December 1945, pp.1178-1182.

16. The two planning errors referred to are:

(i) Headstone Lane scheme in which a highway was subsequently built through an estate, and

(ii) Grange Hill Estate where an industrial area was refused by Walker but later had to be included and therefore put on an unsuitable site.

17. This alternative is stated as one that had already been outlined in his report of 3rd April 1945, of which no record remains. If this report was widely known by Salmon and Walker it is perhaps this that prompted their counter attack in the proposals to the CD&GP.

18. Forshaw's reference in alternative (i) to a division organised and built up in unit divisions and in (iii) the Ultimate Plan, to an Architectural Board, illustrate his progressive views concerning office structure and organisation. This was based on his experience at the Miners Welfare committee.

19. GLRO, LCC minutes 1944, 19th December, pp.664-665.

20. GLRO, CD&GP Com., minutes 1944, 10th December.

21. GLRO, CD&GP Com., presented papers 1944, 18th December. As stated in his application form.

22. The date of these policy ideas in the County of London Plan are 1944, and therefore fit in with the date of the advertisement for the post of Valuer, from which time the CD&GP etc., started having doubts about Forshaw's ideas.

23. Whitfield Lewis, in an interview on 24th May 1983, stated that Walker was "a formidable character, very determined and capable".

24. GLRO, CD&GP Com., minutes 1945, vol.5, 3rd December. Reference to Forshaw's resignation is made in these minutes but details of the content of the discussion were placed in separate "private minutes". These do not survive at the GLRO. Forshaw then takes up the post of Chief Architect and Housing Consultant to the Ministry of Health.

25. GLRO, CD&GP Com., minutes 1946, vol.6, 28th January. CD&GP document 975 listed 6 candidates:

E.G.G. Bax, Senior Architect

E.H. Higham, Architect Grade I

S. Howard, Architect Grade I (acting Senior Architect)

J.W. Oatley, Architect Grade III

S. Pinfold, Senior Architect  
S.H. Smith, Architect Grade II

26. GLRO, LCC minutes 1948, 2nd November, p.661.

27. GLRO, General Purposes Committee (Hereafter GP Com.) minutes 1948, 12th and 26th July. The minutes stated:

"Housing - Organisation of the Council's work:

(1) Owing to the acute housing shortage and the need to secure the greatest possible output of new housing the Council on 18th December 1945 (p.1181) approved for an experimental period of three years, subject to review before the end of that period, arrangements for the organisation of its housing work in one department under the responsibility of one chief officer. The new arrangements came into effect on 1st January 1946 and should, therefore be reviewed before the end of this year.

For various reasons, however, it would be inappropriate to review the experiment at the present time. The delaying effect, on a short view, of any change, the need for the time for adjustment of the departmental organisation to the recent changes in the health and other services; and the ascertainment of the probable future tempo of housing operations within the broad limits imposed by national policy, are all considerations that make it desirable to defer a final settlement. In these circumstances, we suggest that the experimental arrangements should be extended, and the review postponed for twelve months."

28. GLRO, GP Com., presented papers May-July 1946, vol.164. The 37 applicants came from: 12 in the Councils service, 12 in other Local Authorities, 4 in Government Departments and 4 other. These were reduced to 7:

Mr. C. Kennard, age 49, Principal Architect (statutory div.)

Mr. S.H. Loweth, age 52, Architect Kent C.C.

Mr. R.H. Matthew, age 39, Chief Architect and Town Planning Officer.  
Department Health Scotland.

Mr. F.A.C. Maunder, age 37, City Planning Officer. Reconstruction  
Architecture.

Mr. J.N. Meredith, age 53, City Architect Bristol.

Mr. H. Nutall, age 43, Borough Architect Huddersfield.

Hon. Lieut-Col G. Samuel, age 42, Gibraltar T.P.

Mr. E. Williams MBE., age 49, Senior Architect T.P. and Building  
Regulations Division.

Mr. A. Ling, Senior Planning Officer (temp.) of the LCC also applied.

29. GLRO, GP Com., presented papers May-July 1946, vol.164, 2nd May, document 3.

30. Ibid.

31. Whitfield Lewis, in an interview on 24th May 1983, suggested that "as Williams was rather an abrasive and sharp Welsh man, his strong views would not be easily compromised".

32. Matthew's salary at the Department of Health for Scotland when he left was only £1200-1400. The salaries in Public Offices were considered

to be slightly higher for the lowest ranks of inexperienced architects who had just qualified, but very poor for experienced architects in the higher posts, who would receive much higher salaries in private practice.

33. GLRO, GP com., minutes 1948, vol.43, 12th July. The seven chosen for interview were:

Mr. K.F. Giraud, County Architect West Riding.  
Mr. J. Hughes, Director Housing City of Westminster.  
Mr. R.A. Jensen, Director Housing M.B. Paddington.  
Mr. C. Kennard, District Surveyor Kensington.  
Mr. A.G. Ling, Senior Planning Officer LCC.  
Mr. J.L. Martin, Principal Assistant Architect B.R. (LMS).  
Mr. E. Williams, Senior Architect LCC.

Ling, Martin and Williams were the 3 finalists. Martin was the successful candidate.

34. Ibid.

35. GLRO, GP Com., presented papers May-July 1948, vol.171, 12th July.

36. Sir J.L. Martin, in an interview 29th June 1983.

37. See Architectural Review (hereafter AR), vol.99, (March 1946), pp.77-84. Martin's plans for unit station buildings.

38. GLRO, LCC minutes 1947, p.452.

39. GLRO, GP Com., minutes 1948, vol.43, 12th and 26th July.

40. GLRO, LCC minutes 1948, pp.65, 10th February and 764, 30th November.

41. GLRO, LCC minutes 1949, 8th March, p.117.

42. 'London Housing', Architects' Journal, (hereafter AJ), vol.109, (10th March 1949), p228.

43. Ibid, p.226.

44. 'LCC Housing: The Need For A Critical Assessment', AJ, vol.109, (17th March 1949), pp.251-254.

45. Ibid, pp.255-258.

46. 'Letter - I.J. Hayward', AJ, vol.109, (31st March 1949), p.293.

47. The staff of the Housing Department were precluded from personally answering any criticisms by the Councils standing orders.

48. Sir L. Martin, in an interview on 29th June 1983, and Whitfield Lewis, in an interview on 24th May 1983, both suggested that this was the case.

49. I.J. Hayward, 'Letter', AJ, vol.109, (31st March 1949), p.293.

(g) 'LCC Housing - a special announcement' AJ, vol.109, (5th May 1949), pp.401-402.

50. AJ, vol.109, (5th May 1949), p.402. The list of RIBA council members given were:

C.H. Aslin	T.C. Howitt
V. Bain	A.W. Kenyon
J. Murray Easton	A.B. Knapp-Fisher
J.H. Forshaw	S.W. Milburn
E. Maxwell Fry	H.M. Robertson
F. Gibberd	H.J. Rowse
L.C. Howitt	C.G. Stillman
J. Swarbrick	R.A.H. Livett
J.H. Worthington	C. Penn
F.R.S. Yorke	A. Rankine
Prof. J.S. Allen	R.S. Tubbs
H. Braddock	R.H. Uren
D.E.E. Gibson	W. Dobson Chapman
J.L. Gleave	B.H. Cox
C. Oliver	

51. 'Letter R.F. Jordan' AJ, vol.109, (26th May 1949), p.474.

52. In all there were 67 letters written to the AJ concerning LCC Housing from the period 24th March to July 14th 1949. For ease of reference the following key will be used (all dates refer to issues of the AJ):

- 1 24th March, p.271, H. Dessau
- 2 Ibid. C.G.I. Shankland et al
- 3 Ibid, p.293, I.J. Hayward
- 4 Ibid. B.N.L. Whitely
- 5 7th Aril, p.337, L.G. Rearson
- 6 Ibid. C.B. Martindale
- 7 14th April, p.337, R.W. Reeve
- 8 Ibid. J.B. Carter
- 9 Ibid A.G. Stanwell
- 10 21st April, p.359, W. Kretchmer
- 11 28th April, p.381, R.A. Wale et al
- 12 Ibid. A former flat dweller
- 13 Ibid. H.C.D. Cooper
- 14 Ibid. T. Moore
- 15 12th May, p.430, 'Adam'
- 16 19th May, p.451, L. Brett
- 17 Ibid. W. Crabtree
- 18 Ibid. Prof. A.E. Richardson
- 19 Ibid. C. William-Ellis
- 20 Ibid. E.D. Mills
- 21 Ibid. C. Penn
- 22 26th May, p.474, M. Fry & J. Drew
- 23 Ibid. R. Squire
- 24 Ibid. The Times
- 25 Ibid. R.F. Jordan
- 26 Ibid. H. Thomas
- 27 Ibid, p.475, A&BN
- 28 Ibid. B. Westwood

- 29 Ibid. W.H. Groves
- 30 Ibid. N.J. Rushton
- 31 ibid, p.476, J.D. Lennon
- 32 Ibid. L. Manasseh
- 33 Ibid. S. Kadleigh
- 34 2nd June, p.495, H. Robertson
- 35 Ibid. R.E. Enthove
- 36 Ibid. B. Lubetkin
- 37 Ibid, p.496, G.C. Pyne
- 38 Ibid. L. de Syllas
- 39 Ibid. F.T. Bush
- 40 Ibid. D.D. Moore
- 41 Ibid. D. Freeman
- 42 Ibid. R.C.W. Browing
- 43 Ibid. J. Cunningham
- 44 Ibid, p.497, J. Swarbrick
- 45 Ibid. I. Foster
- 46 Ibid. J. Vulliamy
- 47 Ibid. J. Grey
- 48 Ibid. T.A. King
- 49 Ibid. H.T. Swain
- 50 Ibid. G. Goulden
- 51 ibid, p.498, A. Cox
- 52 Ibid. E.B. Musman
- 53 Ibid. D. Stephen
- 54 Ibid. G. Shankland
- 55 Ibid. The Builder
- 56 16th June, p.539, W.W. Scott Moncrief
- 57 Ibid. R. Townsend
- 58 23rd June, p.561, J. Eastwick-Field
- 59 Ibid. O. Singer
- 60 30th June, p.583, P.H. Lawrence
- 61 Ibid. G.L. Price
- 62 Ibid, p.584, F. Moate
- 63 Ibid. R. A. Lanbourn
- 64 Ibid. J.E. Deleuse
- 65 7th July, p.7, I. Colquhoun
- 66 Ibid. G. Elliot
- 67 14th July, p.37, J. Berger

53. See letters for: (a) 4, 16, 29, 34, 38, 40, 41, 53, 63, 65, 67, and  
(b) 7, 36, 2, 25.

54. See letters 20, 29, 65.

55. See letters 5, 10, 11, 13, 15, 21, 22, 28, 43, 47, 48, 49, 54, 61.

56. See letters 10, 13, 15, 22, 61.

57. See letters 10, 43, 49.

58. See letters 8, 23, 45, 58, 66.

59. See letters 58, 60, 45, 23, 8.

60. See letters 20, 27, 30, 31, 50, 57.

61. See letters 25, 35.
62. See letters 26, 39, 56.
63. See letters 2, 8.
64. See letter 8.
65. LCC, Housing-A survey of the Post-War Housing Work of the London County Council 1945-1949, (London, LCC, 1949).
66. 'Astragal', AJ, vol.109, (12th May, 1949), p.428.
67. Sir L. Martin, in an interview on 29th June, 1983.
68. See letters 10, 15.
69. GLRO, H Com., presented papers November-December 1949, vol.99, 2nd December.
70. Sir L. Martin, in an interview on 29th June 1983 confirmed this.
71. GLRO, H Com., presented papers November-December 1949, vol.99, 2nd December. Presented as document GP875 and dated 30th December 1949.
72. GLRO, GP Com., presented papers January-March 1950, vol.176. Document GP938.
73. 'Two houses at Chichester', AR, vol.107, (June 1950), pp.397-403.
74. The example of E. Williams can be made here, he applied for jobs of Architect, Deputy Architect and Principal Housing Architect.
75. GLRO, GP Com., presented papers January-March 1950, vol.176, March 6th. Document GP952.
76. Ibid. Five were interviewed for the post of Principal Housing Architect:  
  
J.A. Bent, age 42, Scottish Special Housing Association Ltd.  
R.A. Jensen, age 40, Director Housing M.B. Paddington.  
C.M. Locke, age 40, Consultant Director Portsmouth Survey Plan.  
E. Williams, age 53, Senior Architect, Concert Hall Division.  
H.J.W. Lewis, age 38, Associate Norman and Dawbarn.
77. Whitfield Lewis, in an interview on 24th May 1983, stated that he had not at that time really considered a job in a Public Office. It was only on the realisation that he would not be offered a partnership in Norman and Dawbarn that he considered the suggestion of his friends, A. Ling and P. Johnson-Marshall (who were already at the LCC) to apply for the post of Principal Housing Architect.
78. 'Flats in St. Pancras'. AR, vol.106, (August 1949).
79. 'Green Wood Road, Housing', Architectural Design, (hereafter AD), (December 1948), pp.80-85.

80. Ibid.

81. Ibid.

82. GLRO, Establishment Committee (hereafter E Com.), presented papers January-June 1950, vol.297, 9th March.

83. GLRO, GP Com., presented papers July-September 1950, vol.178, 25th July. Manpower sub-committee report. Also in 1949 the separate Planning Division in the Architects Department had been increased in anticipation of the extra work due to the 1947 T&CP Act and the Development Plan of the County of London. The division composed of four groups: (i) Information and research group, (ii) Development plan group, (iii) Area planning groups, 6 areas. (iv) Reconstruction groups for Stepney, Poplar, Bermondsey, South Bank and the Elephant and Castle.

84. GLRO, LCC minutes 1951, p.81, 20th February, Housing Committee report.

85. Whitfield Lewis, in an interview on 24th May 1983, claimed that this had been the case.

86. GLRO, LCC minutes 1953, 21st April, p.170.

87. It was a constant problem in the department that there were insufficient good designers to go round.

88. 'The recommended change of Responsibility in the LCC Architects' Dept.', AJ, vol.110, (29th December 1949), p.725.

89. 'Astragal', AJ, vol.111, (12th January 1950), p.31.

90. 'Astragal', AJ, vol.111, (26th January 1950), p.113.

91. F.E. Shroobree, 'letter - LCC Housing', AJ, vol.111, (30th March 1950), p.388.

## Section 2.1

1. See section 1.3 for an analysis of the situation concerning Forshaw's resignation.
2. The other major project that Forshaw was starting work on was the Stepney/Poplar Reconstruction area. The planning and development of parts of this area parallel those of Woodberry Down, but were worked on and adapted after Forshaw had left. The 8-storey blocks used in this scheme were identical (apart from minor changes in design which resulted from the use of a steel frame structure for a couple of blocks) as those built earlier at Woodberry Down. The Stepney/Poplar Reconstruction area therefore does not present any new developments and so the more complete example of Woodberry Down has been chosen for detailed analysis.
3. Described in London Housing 1937, LCC, 1937, pp.91-98.
4. Ibid., pp.98-102.
5. Ibid., p.98.
6. Ibid.
7. N. Simmonds, 'London's Housing: The housing accomplished by the LCC.', Building, vol.12. (June 1937), pp.227-231.
8. Ibid., p.231.
9. London Housing 1937, op.cit., pp.39-42.
10. This criticism came from many quarters: for aesthetic and planning considerations see MARS and ASSTA, for a sociological viewpoint see E. Denby (who became a member of the LCC Housing Committee in the 1940s) and for a political viewpoint see Daily Worker, 18th May 1935.
11. Flat types were the standardised floor plans of flats that were passed in principle by the Housing Committee. When new schemes were submitted to the committee layouts referred to an accepted 'type plan' so that the committee did not have to discuss the internal layouts for each new scheme.
12. London Housing 1937, op.cit., pp.39-42. For 1934 Types I-IV.
13. P. Coe and M Reading, Lubetkin and Tecton, Architecture and Social Commitment - a critical study (London: The Arts Council of Great Britain, 1981) p.135.
14. Ibid., p.137.
15. 'The Houses that are needed', Daily Worker, 18th June 1935, quoted in P. Coe and M. Reading, Lubetkin and Tecton, op.cit., p.139.
16. P. Coe and M. Reading, Lubetkin and Tecton, op.cit., p.138.
17. London Housing 1937, op.cit., p.44.



18. For an analysis of the problems of the discussion of Modern architecture in the architectural press see J.M. Richards, 'Architectural Criticism in the 1930s', in J. Summerson, ed., Essays for N. Pevsner (London, Allen Lane, 1968).
19. Briefly described in the Builder, vol.152 (19 March 1937), p.640. Unfortunately no details are given of any ensuing debate.
20. London Housing 1937, op.cit., pp.111-113.
21. GLRO, H&PH Com., presented papers 1942, vol.75, 15th June 1942, 'Evidence of the Council to Central Housing Advisory Committee, sub-committee on the design of dwellings.' doc. HP258. Joint report by the Architect, the Valuer and the Chief Engineer.
22. Ibid.
23. GLRO, H&PH Com., minutes 1940-42, vol.7, 4th November 1942.
24. GLRO, H&PH Com., presented papers 1942, vol.75, 2nd December 1942. Doc HP263, 'Housing after the war - General Policy and Preparations.' A joint report by the Architect, Valuer and Chief Engineer.
25. GLRO, H&PH Com., minutes 1943-44, vol.8, 17th February 1943. In response to a memo from the CD&GP Com. the H&PH Com. resolved that 'the CD&GP Com. be asked to consider in the light of advice from the officers concerned as to the staffing arrangements and organisation of the Chief Engineers Department, the Architects Department and the Valuation, Estate and Housing Department with a view to carrying out as rapidly as possible the preliminary work in connection with the large scale operations contemplated as regards the provision of additional housing accommodation immediately after the war'. See also Section 1.3 for the implications of this memo.
26. P. Abercrombie and J.H. Forshaw, The County of London Plan (hereafter CLP) (London: MacMillan Co.Ltd., 1943), p.V, Authors Note.
27. Ibid., Frontispiece - caption quoting Churchill, the Prime Minister from a speech of 8th October 1940.
28. P. Abercrombie, Town and Country Planning (Oxford University Press, 1933, 2nd edition 1943).
29. GLRO, H&PH Com., presented papers 1942, vol.75, 4th November 1942. See Forshaw's review of the 'Scott Committee report on Land Utilization in Rural areas'.
30. CLP, op.cit., paragraph 64.
31. Ibid., paragraph 67.
32. See Labour Party, The Old World and the New Society: a report on the problems of War and Peace Reconstruction, issued by the National Executive Committee for discussion prior to the 1942 Annual Conference May 25-28th.

33. Abercrombie and Forshaw were both Socialists, and the team also included K. Campbell and A. Ling who were Communists.
34. P. Abercrombie, Town and Country Planning, op.cit.
35. A. Ling, in an interview on 18th October 1983, supplied this information.
36. CLP, op.cit., paragraph 601.
37. Ibid., paragraph 302.
38. Ibid., paragraph 26. Compare to the LCC's later work at Alton East.
39. AR, vol.94, (August 1943), pp.39-42, Marginalia, probably written by J.M. Richards.
40. CLP, op.cit., paragraphs 566-571.
41. AR, vol.94, (August 1943), op.cit., p.40.
42. See the analysis by E.C. Kent and F.J. Samuely, 'Physical Planning, a method of comparative analysis demonstrated on four London Plans.', AJ, vol.96, (10 August 1944), pp.99-115. They conclude that some of the more radical solutions of the MARS and LRCC (London Reconstruction Committee of RIBA) could be integrated to advantage into the better researched LCC plan.
43. Labour Party, Housing and Planning after the war: The Labour Party's Post-War Policy (Labour Party 1943).
44. Ibid.
45. As reported in AJ, vol.94, (15 July 1943), p.46.
46. Ibid.
47. GLRO, H&PH Com., minutes 1943-44, vol.8, 2nd June 1943.
48. Ministry of Health, 'Post-war Housing Programme', circular 2778, 4th March 1943.
49. GLRO, H&PH Com., minutes 1943-44, vol.8, 21st July 1943. At this meeting the Chairman, Dawson, resigned due to pressure of his own work and Gibson was nominated as his successor.
50. GLRO, H&PH Com., presented papers 1943, vol.76, 2nd June 1943 and 21st July 1943. Doc. HP294 Report by the Architect.
51. Ibid., Valuer's report HP295, of 21st May 1943.
52. Ibid., Comptollers Report.
53. Ibid., 21st July 1943.
54. GLRO, H&PH Com., presented papers 1943, vol.76, 17th November.

Doc. HP320 'Post-war Housing Programme - County of London Plan', a joint report by the Architect and Valuer.

55. Ibid., 1st December. Memo from the Finance Com. HP326.

56. GLRO, H&PH Com., minutes 1943-44, vol.8, 27th September 1944.

57. GLRO, H&PH Com., presented papers 1944, vol.77, 22nd February, 8th March, 13th September, 27th September.

58. Ibid., doc. HP341, Architect's report.

59. See also Abercrombie's work on the Greater London Plan, in which out-county estates are criticised.

60. GLRO, H&PH Com., minutes 1943-44, vol.8, 27th September 1944.

61. See discussion in Section 1.2.

62. Times (4th December 1945).

63. See Section 1.3 on department organisation.

64. GLRO, H&PH Com., presented papers 1942, vol.75, 2nd December, doc. HP263, 'Housing after the war..', op.cit.

65. GLRO, H&PH Com., presented papers 1943, vol.76, 27th January, doc. HP274 'Woodberry Down Site', a report by the Architect.

66. Ibid., the Architect's report states that the 1938 plans for Woodberry Down, Registered plan no. 3644/38, were approved by the H&PH Com. on the 20th July 1938.

67. Ibid.

68. Ibid.

69. See analysis of the CLP and its description of 'Mixed Development'.

70. GLRO, H&PH Com., minutes 1943-44, vol.8, 15th March 1943. Those present were:

Latham - Leader of the Council  
T. Dawson - Chairman H&PH Com.  
I.M. Bolton - Vice-chairman H&PH Com.  
L. Silkin MP - Chairman TP Com.

71. GLRO, H&PH Com., presented papers 1943, vol.76, 15th March.

72. GLRO, H&PH Com., presented papers 1943, vol.76, 6th October.

73. See discussion of the Valuer's response to the CLP, Section 2.1.

74. GLRO, H&PH Com., presented papers 1944, vol.77, 26th January 1944. Doc. HP323, the Architects report on the 8 storey blocks.

75. GLRO, H&PH Com., minutes 1943-44, vol.8, 11th September 1944 and

minutes 1945-46, vol.9, 18th April and 24th October.

76. Ibid. 24th October. Final layout plan 697/45.

77. This N/S orientation had been used by Mebes and Gropius in Berlin, eg. Gropius's Ring Siedlung, 1929-31 and Gropius and M. Fry's project for flats in Windsor Park, 1935.

78. See A. Revetz, Model Estate. Planned Housing at Quarry Hill Leeds (Croom Helm 1974), p.142, aerial photograph.

79. See S. Pepper, 'Ossulton Street: Early LCC Experiments in High Rise Housing 1925-29.', London Journal, '7(i)(1981)', pp.46-64.

80. CLP, paragraph 26.

81. GLRO, H&PH Com., minutes 1945-46, vol.9, 15th May 1946. A letter from the Ministry of Health was received asking the LCC to become involved in experiments in steel framed flats.

82. GLRO, H&PH Com., presented papers Jan-June 1945, vol.78, 24th January, doc. HP402, 'Methods of House construction'.

83. GLRO, H&PH Com., presented papers Jul-Dec 1945, vol.79, 18th July.

84. Ibid.

85. GLRO, H&PH Com., minutes 1945-46, vol.9, 24th October.

86. See Building Digest, vol.8, (June 1948), p.207 for diagram and explanation of the structure.

87. See Architect and Building News, vol.193, (7 May 1948), pp.424-426.

88. Ibid.

89. Ibid. The article states that S. Howard was the architect in charge.

90. Other journals that reviewed the Minerva St. Estate were:  
The Builder, (7 March 1947), pp.220-222.  
Architect and Building News, vol.189, (14 March 1947), pp.169-173,  
and (7 May 1948), pp.424-426.  
AR, vol.105, (27 March 1947), pp.253-256.  
Concrete Quarterly, (No.1, July 1947), p.16.  
Building Digest, vol.8, (June 1948), pp.206-208.  
Building, vol.22, (June 1948), pp.186-187.

91. Building Digest, vol.8, (June 1948), p.208.

92. Reviewed in the Builder, vol.174, (18 March 1948), p.340.

93. S. Pepper, 'Ossulton St.', op.cit.

94. O. Arup, 'The Engineer Looks Back', AR, vol.166, (November 1979), pp.315-321.

95. Ibid., p.316.
96. Ibid.
97. Quote by L. Silkin from the conference on Woodberry Down. See Footnote 75.
98. S. Pepper, 'Ossulton St...', op.cit., p.49.
99. GLRO, H&PH Com., minutes 1945-46, vol.9, 6th June 1945.
100. Quoted in LCC Housing 1945-49 (LCC 1949), p.49.
101. As stated in the Builder, vol.176, (25 February 1949), p.248.
102. S. Howard was promoted after Forshaw's resignation to Housing Architect under C. Walker the Valuer. See Section 1.3.
103. The LCC records give no details of the names of individual architects that work on specific schemes. All work went out under the name of the Chief Architect.
104. Reviewed in: AR, vol.99, (2 May 1946), p.345.  
Official Architect, vol.9, (May 1946), pp.261-262.
105. G. Jenkins, 'Modernism in Architecture', Architectural Association Journal, vol.63, (1927), p.160.
106. R. Blomfield, 'Is Modern Architecture on the right track?', The Listener, vol.10, (1933), p.124.
107. P. Abercrombie, Town and Country Planning, op.cit.
108. Quote used to describe the Minerva St. estate by a reviewer in the Architect and Building News, op.cit. See footnote 87.
109. Official Architect, vol.9, (May 1946), pp.261-262.
110. K. Campbell, in an interview on 14th June 1983, described his own experience of architectural education in the 1930s, and confirmed this point.
111. P. Abercrombie, Town and Country Planning, op.cit., previously quoted, see footnote 28.
112. See 'Stepney and Poplar redevelopment since the war' Interbuild, (February 1961), pp.16-35.
113. Housing: A survey of the Post-war housing work of the LCC 1945-49, (London: LCC 1949), cover.
114. Ibid., frontispiece.

## Section 2.2

1. See section 1.3 for a discussion of the post-war Housing organisation at the LCC.
2. For a discussion of the broader post-war planning issues for London see K. Young and P. Garside, Metropolitan London: politics and urban change 1837-1981. (London, Edward Arnold, 1982) and J.B. Cullingworth, Environmental Planning Vol.I: Reconstruction and Land Use Planning 1939-1947 (HMSO 1975).
3. For an analysis of the pre-war flatted estate policy of the LCC see section 2.1.
4. The two definitions of "Mixed Development" are (1) one based on architectural principles, ie. variety of form, building type and height of blocks. (2) One based on social principles, ie. variety of income groups mixed within one development. For a discussion of definition (1) see section 2.1 on the CLP.
5. For a more detailed analysis of pre-war LCC policy, see K. Young and P. Garside, Metropolitan London, op.cit.
6. Up with the Homes, down with the Slums, London Labour Party Conference report, 1934.
7. L. Silkin visited Europe in 1936 with LCC Housing Committee members. A report was produced "LCC: W.C. Housing on the continent and the application of continental ideas to the problem of the County of London". This report stressed the need to provide more communal facilities and especially local industry and employment.
8. See H. Morrison, 'What I would like to do for London', Evening Standard (9 January 1936). This was written in response to an attack by Garden City supporters on the LCC, R.L. Reiss and Miss A. Sayle. Morrison agreed that garden cities were an "Ideal" answer to London's housing problems but not one financially viable for the LCC to carry out. They were "dreams" only.
9. L. Silkin, chairman of the H&PH Com. from 1936 to 1940. In 1936 and 1937 he had dismissed these ideas due to finance.
10. K. Young and P. Garside, Metropolitan London, op.cit, p.188.
11. H. Westwood replaced F. Hunt who was Valuer from 1915-1937. H. Westwood dies in 1944 and is replaced by C. Walker.
12. See P. Garside, Town Planning in London, pp.314-20.
13. Prof. P. Abercrombie, Greater London Plan 1944, a report prepared on behalf of the standing conference on London Regional Planning by the Prof. Abercrombie at the request of the Minister of Town and Country Planning (hereafter GLP) (HMSO, 1945).
14. There were two definitions for a Green Belt for London, the first

was defined by the 1938 Green Belt Act. The LCC had utilized £2,000,000 to purchase areas of out-county land to prevent development, under H. Morrison's initiative. The second was a larger area as defined in Abercrombie's GLP.

15. See section 2.1 for a discussion of the CLP.

16. L. Silkin, The Nation's Land (London: Fabian Publications, Research series 70, 1943).

17. L. Silkin, 'Our Plan for Land and Houses', in Labour Party, Forward from Victory (London: Victor Collanz, 1946).

18. See J.B. Cullingworth, Environmental Planning Vol.III, New Towns Policy (HMSO, 1979), and K. Young and P. Garside, Metropolitan London, op.cit. p.265.

19. GLRO, H&PH Com., presented papers Jan-April 1946, vol.80, 10th April, doc.TP585, 'GLP 1944, Architect, Chief Engineer and Education Officer's report'.

20. Ibid., doc.HP575, Valuer's report.

21. Sites at Essex:	Loughton (extension)	
	Dagnam Park (extension)	
	Thorndon Park	
Surrey:	Chessington	consent not
Middlesex:	Harefield	forthcoming
		from ministry

22. GLRO, H&PH Com., presented papers Jan-April 1946, vol.80, 10th April. Comptrollers report on the GLP.

23. GLRO, H&PH Com., minutes 1945-46, vol.9, 10th May 1946.

24. That is, until Gibson was replaced as Chairman by R. Stamp on 26th April 1950.

25. As stated by Latham in a debate in the House of Lords on the GLP. See The Times, 10th April 1946, p.7, and the replies to Lord Balfour of Burleigh and Viscount Samuel.

26. Gibson became chairman of the H&PH Com. on 17th July 1943 when Dawson resigned due to personal commitments.

27. For an outline of Walker's background see section 1.3. His experience in the North country and Croydon was mainly in the building of large cottage estates.

28. Quoted in J.B. Cullingworth, New Towns policy, op.cit., p.11.

29. GLRO, H&PH Com., minutes 1945-46, vol.9, 23rd January 1946.

30. Walker, report on the GLP, op.cit.

31. Letters of protest were received from:

- (i) A.M. Lipton Chairman of the executive committee of the Housing Centre, The Times, 15th April 1946, p.5.
- (ii) Leatherhead and District Countryside Protection Society, The Times, 9th July 1946, p.5.
- (iii) Chairman of Central Council of Civic Society, and
- (iv) De L'Isle and Dudley: Chairman of executive committee of London Society, both in The Times, 15th August 1946, p.5.
32. J. Hare also tried to stop the purchase of sites at Slough, Farnham Royal, Langley and Wexham. This was put to the vote which resulted in a 11 to 5 decision in favour of purchasing the sites.
33. GLRO, H&PH com., presented papers May-July 1946, vol.81, 15th May. Report by the Valuer on the Chessington scheme.
34. See K. Young and P. Garside, Metropolitan London, op.cit., p.265, for a summary of Silkin's use of New Town policy to contain the LCC's Green Belt housing.
35. Lady E. Denington, in an interview on 17th November 1983, recounted the LCC debate on Chessington which she opposed. After the count and result in favour of the scheme Silkin confided in her that he, as Minister of Town and Country Planning, would not let the scheme go ahead.
36. GLRO, H&PH Com., presented papers Aug-Oct 1946, vol.82, 9th October.
37. The H&PH Com., is renamed the Housing Committee (hereafter H Com.) on 4th June 1947.
38. GLRO, H Com., presented papers Aug-Oct 1947, vol.87, 24th September, doc.Hg792 'New Towns'.
39. Ibid., memo of Bolton and Gibson, dated 15th September 1947.
40. 17/11/48 - Farnham Royal and Langley Public Enquiry  
 20/20/48 - appeal to Minister of T&CP about Surrey  
                   CC's refusal to allow Merstham estate.  
 29/6/49 - delays over compulsory purchase of Sheerwater.
41. The Times, 28th May 1947, p.2.
42. GLRO, H Com., presented papers May-June 1950, vol.102, 21st June, doc.Hg579, 'Greater London Area - movement of population to new and expanded towns: report by Architect and Valuer'.
43. 'Leading article: Inner City space shortage', The Times, 5th August 1950.
44. The Times, 8th August 1950, p.5.
45. The Times, 14th August 1950, p.5.
46. The Times, 23rd August 1950, p.5.
47. The Times, 28th September 1950, p.5.



48. GLRO, H Com., minutes 1950, vol.13, 25th October. R. Stamp, Gibson's successor, discussed the possibility of getting involved in New Town building rather than isolated out-county estates. They resolved to approach the New Towns Corporation.
49. See section 2.1.
50. P. Abercrombie, GLP, op.cit., paragraph 280.
51. 'Housing Policy: Mr. Bevan's review', The Times, 18th October, p.8. See also section 1.2 for a discussion of Bevan's Housing policy
52. Ibid.
53. Ibid.
54. Note the use of the term "income group" rather than class.
55. 'New Towns, a great Adventure', The Times, 12th July 1946, p.6.
56. 'Tenant of New Houses - claims of the middle class - Mr. Bevan's reminder', The Times, 25th November 1946, p.2.
57. The Times, 29th July 1946, p.3.
58. See section 1.2.
59. 'Housing Bill', The Times, 5th March 1949, p.5.
60. This had been achieved since 1947 by administrative discretion.
61. 'Housing aims', The Times, 17th March 1949, p.6.
62. H. Morrison, 'Middle classes in Labours scheme', The Times, 18th November 1950, p.4.
63. GLRO, H&PH com., presented papers 1943, vol.76, 6th October. It was resolved to build 9% of the total buildings as the larger LP4 and LP5 types.
64. GLRO, H&PH Com., minutes 1945-46, vol.9, 24th October 1945. The P range type plans were prepared by Forshaw and accepted on 24th October 1945.
65. GLRO, H Com., minutes 1947, vol.10, 16th July and 24th September, doc.Hg795, a report on the larger houses.
66. GLRO, H Com., presented papers Aug-Oct 1947, vol.87, 24th September, 'Memo from the Finance Committee - Cottage Estates: larger houses for mixed development'.
67. Ibid. The Valuer's report on the F Com. memo.
68. GLRO, H Com., minutes 1950, vol.13, 7th July, doc.Hg625, report by the Valuer on Industry on out-county estates.

69. 'Housing Policy', The Times, 18th October 1945, p.8.
70. Ibid.
71. P. Abercrombie, GLP, op.cit., paragraph 63.
72. Ibid., paragraph 487.
73. See section 1.3, and W. Segal, 'Housing: the post-war work of the LCC', vol.22, (Oct/Nov/Dec 1948). These articles name W.L. Ward<sup>as</sup> responsible for out-county estates; Newman, Reeve and Broadwater<sup>as</sup> section architects; R.D. Waters Housing Engineer responsible for roads, drains etc.
74. GLRO, H&PH Com., presented papers 1942, vol.75, 15th July. Doc. Housing No.258. See section 2.1 for an analysis of this report.
75. See section 2.1 and the problems Forshaw had in implementing CLP ideas at Woodberry Down.
76. GLRO, H&PH Com., presented papers 1943, vol.76, 2nd June, doc.HP294. The LCC had sites ready at Chingford, Headstone Lane, Hainault, Debden and St. Helier.
77. See C. Walker, LCC Housing Committee: Plans and Details of Standard Types of Housing Accommodation (LCC November 1949)  
Types P1, P2, P3 were retained and revised.  
P4, P5, LP4, LP5 were replaced by 7 new V types: V4, V4a, V5, LV4, LV4n, LV5, LV5a.
78. Ibid., LV5b, V6, V6a, V6b, V6c, V7.
79. Ibid., p.3.
80. GLRO, H Com., minutes 1949, vol.12, 23rd February.
81. LCC, Housing: a survey of the post-war housing work of the LCC 1945-1949, (LCC 1949).
82. Walker's report on F Com. memo, op.cit., footnote 67.
83. C. Walker, quoted in The Architect and Building News, (18th February 1949), p.145. Underlining mine.
84. C. Walker, quoted in The Builder, (11th February 1949), p.179.
85. GLRO, H Com., presented papers Mar-April 1950, 15th March.
86. Housing: a survey of the post-war housing work of the LCC 1945-1949, (London: LCC 1949), pp.16-17.
87. GLRO, H Com., minutes 1950, vol.13, 6th March Housing Development sub-committee and 7th March Housing Committee.
88. GLRO, H Com., minutes 1949, vol.12, 29th June, Sheerwater site plans accepted.

89. C. Walker, quoted in The Architect and Building News, (18th February 1949), p.144.
90. Housing: a survey of the post-war housing work of the LCC 1945-1949, (London: LCC 1949), p.37.
91. As stated in the review in The Builder, (6th June 1952), pp.841-845.
92. Unlike at Woodberry Down where, although scheduled in the CLP for a density of 136ppa, the H&PH Com. insisted that a higher density of 178ppa should be used to make a more efficient use of the site.
93. P. Abercrombie and J.H. Forshaw, CLP, (London, 1944), P.80, fig.11.
94. These figures for the Kingswood Estate are taken from the LCC's pamphlet Housing: a survey of the post-war housing work of the LCC 1945-1949, (London: LCC 1949), p.51.
95. GLRO, H Com., minutes 1947, vol.10, 12th February.
96. E. Denington in an interview on 17th November 1983, in which she described how Gibson was outraged by her election to vice chairman and refused to acknowledge her despite having to share an office.
97. See section 1.3 for Matthew's appointment.
98. GLRO, H Com., minutes 1949, vol.12, 26th January.
99. GLRO, H Com., presented papers Jan-Feb 1949, vol.94, 26th January. Report of 7th January by the Clerk of the Council, J.R.H. Roberts, on the Live Architecture Exhibition.
100. Ibid.
101. GLRO, H Com., minutes 1949, vol.12, 4th May.
102. GLRO, H Com., presented papers Oct-Nov 1949, vol.98, 14th November. Housing and Town Planning joint development sub-committee meeting. Doc.Hg357 Lansbury.
103. Ibid., concurrent report by the Architect to the Council, R.H. Matthew.
104. See section 1.3 on the return of the control of Housing to the Architect.
105. The Times, 17th December 1949, p.1.
106. The Times, 20th December 1949, p.5.

### Section 2.3

1. GLRO, H. Com., Minutes 1948, vol.11, 8th November.  
Sites acquired: Roehampton Lane 5/12/45  
Putney Park Lane 20/2/46  
Wimbledon Park side 15/5/46  
Portsmouth Road 15/5/46  
Alton Road sites 20/11/46  
Prince's Way 28/1/48  
Albert Drive 10/2/48  
Portsmouth 1-7 10/2/48  
Putney Park Lane 10/2/48  
Wimbledon Park side No.2 13/7/49
2. GLRO, H.Com., Minutes 1948, vol.11, 1st December.
3. Plans of these original schemes do not survive in the records. Part of the plan for the revised scheme at Putney Park Lane does still remain in the Housing Committee presented papers and shows the site laid out with blocks of 4/5/6-storey axially arranged at right angles, and covering all the site.
4. This small site, although returned to the control of the architect in December 1949, was not in conflict with the development of the larger sites that were to form the Alton and Ackroyden estates. Also £1,000 in fees had already been paid to Stewart and Hendry for their design work and so Matthew allowed the scheme to be continued.
5. GLRO, H & PH Com., Minutes 1947, vol.10, 12th Feb. This was at the same meeting that J. Hare attempted to move a motion to set up 2 sub-committees of the H & PH Com. to look at design.
6. GLRO, H.Com., Minutes 1949, vol.12, 13th July.
7. GLRO, H.Com., presented papers June-July 1949, 13th July, doc.Hg256 'Wimbledon Parkside, Wandsworth' report by Dir.H&V.
8. Ibid. Italics mine. No mention is made of the architectural quality of the schemes by Matthew.
9. GLRO, H.Com., presented papers Jan-Feb 1949, 12th January.
10. GLRO, H.Com., Minutes 1949, vol.12, 7th December. Plans for the Putney Park Lane site were also accepted.
11. See section 2.2 for the discussion of Walker's policies under question, and section 1.3 for the public debate in the AJ on Walker's Housing Work.
12. GLRO, H.Com., Minutes 1950, vol.13, 24th June.
13. GLRO, H.Com., presented papers June-July 1950, vol.103, 24th June, doc.GP1. 'Housing organisation of the Council's housing work. Report by the Clerk of the Council 31st March 1950'.

14. GLRO, H.Com., presented papers Oct-Dec 1950, vol.104, 25th October. 'Prince's Way and Wimbledon Park Side nos.2 and 3, a report by the Architects'.
15. Ibid, report by the Director of Housing and Valuer.
16. Ibid, report by the Comptroller.
17. GLRO, H.Com., minutes 1950, vol.13, 8th November.
18. GLRO, H.Com., minutes 1950, vol.13, 15th November, H. Management Sub-Com.
19. GLRO, H.Com., presented papers Jan-Feb 1951, vol.105, 24th January. 'LCC flatted estates - experience and special requirements of families living in large blocks of flats', report by the Architect.
20. Ibid, report of the Director of Housing and Valuer.
21. Ibid.
22. Ibid.
23. GLRO, H.Com., presented papers June-July 1951, vol.108, 6th June.
24. Lady Pepler was the wife of Sir George L. Pepler, a leading town planner. She was thus well versed in contemporary debates regarding Houses vs. Flats.
25. GLRO, H.Com., Minutes 1952, vol.15, 27th February.
26. GLRO, H.Com., Minutes 1952, vol.15. 18th June.
27. GLRO, H.Com., Minutes 1954, vol.17. 17th Feb.
28. GLRO, H.Com., Minutes 1955, vol.18, 11th May.
29. GLRO, H.Com., presented papers Jan- 9 Feb 1955, 18th January.doc. "My Job - by Margaret Willis, A sociologist in the Architects Dept. of the LCC", a script for a radio broadcast.
30. Ibid.
31. See also the report M. Willis, LCC Architects' Department, Living in High Flats (an investigation carried out among tenants at present living in high blocks of flats) (LCC, January 1955). Her conclusions were that 1) flats in 8- to 12-storeys were popular 2) views of either a landscape or a street scene were preferred 3) children under 7 years should not live in flats above the 4th storey 4) recessed balconies gave a feeling of greater security 5) estates should be large enough for tenants to have a wide choice of friends, but be homely in appearance and 6) tenants would be content if they could choose their position of their flat.
32. Ibid. See also (M. Willis, Environment and the Home (London: LCC, 1954), M. Willis, Survey of play areas on housing estates (London: LCC, 1950) and M. Willis, Private Balconies (London: LCC, 1956).

33. GLRO, H.Com., presented papers Mar-April 1951, vol.106, 7th March, Doc.Hg899 'New Type Plans for flats, report by the Architect'.
34. GLRO, H.Com., presented papers Mar-April 1951, vol.106, 4th April. Housing (Management) Sub-Com. Doc.Hg900, report by Director of Housing and Valuer.
35. GLRO, H.Com., Minutes 1951, vol.14, 11th April - SA/A, SA/B and SA/C were passed, provided that SA/B flats be provided only to a limited extent for experimental purposes to obtain the tenants reactions. The BA/A were not accepted until revised by modifying with a sliding door between the kitchen and the living room. These were accepted on 13th June 1951.
36. See I. Cox, 'Homes and Gardens' in The South Bank Exhibition, a guide to the story it tells (HMSO, 1951) pp. 69-72.
37. GLRO, H.Com., presented papers Jan-Feb 1954, 20th January, 'LCC Exhibition of Housing Schemes, report by the Architect to the Council'.
38. GLRO, H.Com., presented paper Jan-Feb 1952, vol.110, 6th February, doc.Hg320 'Accommodation for Higher-Income Groups, statement by the chairman of the H.Com'.
39. GLRO, H.Com., Minutes 1952, vol.15, 6th Feb.
40. GLRO, H.Com., Minutes 1954, Vol.17, 17th Feb.
41. See section 2.2 for a discussion of Macmillan's Housing policy.
42. GLRO, H.Com., Minutes 1955, vol.18, 11th May.
43. C.Walker, already quoted section 2.2.
44. See 'LCC Housing: a new approach', The Builder, vol.179 (1st December 1950) p.555. 'LCC Housing: First project by New Housing Division', Architectural Design vol.21 (Jan 1951).
45. 'Council's Architects Departments', Architectural Design, Vol.22, (January 1952) pp.2-16.
46. See (i) 'Portsmouth Road, Roehampton', Keystone (May-June 1952) pp.36-39, and following letters and criticism (July-August) p.59.  
 (ii) R.Furneaux Jordan, 'LCC. New standards in official Architecture', AR, Vol.120 (November 1956) pp.303-324.  
 (iii) N. Pevsner, 'Roehampton, LCC Housing and the picturesque Tradition', AR, vol.126 (July 1959) pp.21, 22 and 35.
46. Unfortunately the LCC records do not give detailed breakdowns of architects working on specific schemes, nor do they include any discussion or comments as to the aims of the architects in their design work. No discussion is recorded in the H.Com. records on style or image of the housing work. Most reviews in the Journals of these schemes merely describe the estates, and fail to analyse style and meaning. The body of material to draw on for these analyses is therefore extremely limited, and relies upon personal reminiscences, which are not always as objective

or reliable as could be desired.

47. R.S. Haynes, 'Design and Image in English Urban Housing 1945-57, A study of the Influence of social ideas and attitudes on Architectural Design'. (Unpublished M.Phil Thesis, Univ. College, London, 1976) pp.34-55.

48. See AJ (nov. 23 1950) p.415, Builder (Dec. 8 1950) pp.590-91, Architect & Building News (Dec. 1950) p. 618-22, AJ (Dec 1 1950) pp. 476-77, Building (Dec. 1950) pp. 440-444, AR (Dec. 1950) p.419, Architect & Building News (Nov. 24 1950) p.566, Builder (Nov. 24 1950) pp.526-528, Official Architect (Jan 1951) pp.30-31, Official Architect (Apr 1951) p.207.

49. GLRO, H.Com., Minutes 1950, vol.14, 8th November.

50. The T plan also made access by fire-engine platforms easier as they could gain access to 3 sides of each flat in the event of fire.

51. See Architectural Design, vol.21 (Jan. 1951), p.22.

52. GLRO, H.Com., presented papers Oct-Dec. 1950, 25th October. 'LCC, Princes Way and Wimbledon Park Sites 2 and 3, New Types - (i) Point Blocks - external finishes.

53. Details given in R.H. Matthew, 'Council's Architect's Department', Architectural Design, vol.22 (January 1952), p.12.

54. C. Lucas, in an interview on 29th September 1983, described Barr et al. as the 'Swedish boys' who had opposing views on architectural and planning ideology.

55. The layout of Ackroyden was influenced by A. Ling, Senior Planning Officer in the Architects office. Ling's involvement in design matters become an area of contention as the architects working on the scheme felt their role was being undermined. After Ackroyden a clearer demarkation of responsibility was drawn up.

56. GLRO, H.Com., presented papers Oct-Dec 1950, 25th October, op.cit.

57. Ibid.

58. Ibid.

59. See: Architect & Building News, (June 4, 1958) pp.743-749. AD, (June 1961) p.256.

60. GLRO, H.Com., presented papers Jan-Feb 1952, Vol.110, 27th February, meeting of the Housing & Town Planning joint development Sub-Committee, doc.Hg340. Highbury Quadrant site dev.

61. 'LCC Housing I', Architect and Building News, Vol.213 (4th June 1958), p.743.

62. Ibid., p.745.

63. Ibid., pp.743-744.
64. Ibid., p.745.
65. See: Builder (Nov. 9, 1951) pp.621-625, AJ (Nov 8, 1951) p.548, AJ (Nov 15, 1951) pp.588-592, Architect & Building News (Nov 29, 1951) pp.617-622, Building (Dec 1951) pp.464-468, AD (Jan 1952) pp.14-16, AR (Jan 1954) pp.55-57.
66. GLRO, H.Com., Minutes 1951, vol.14, 17th October.
67. GLRO, H.Com., presented papers Oct-Dec 1951, vol.14, 17th October. Doc.Hgl176, Joint report by Chief Engineer, Architect and Director of Housing and Valuer.
68. At a meeting of the East Herts Branch of the A.B.T., at Hertford in January 1952. Reported in Keystone (May-June 1952) pp.36-39.
69. Ibid., p.39.
70. Ibid., p.37.
71. Quoted from "LCC Housing II", Architect and Building News, vol.213 (11th June 1958), pp.767-779.
72. Quoted by O. Cox in "The Alton Est. Roehampton, after 25 years", Housing Review (Sept-Oct. 1980) pp.187-72 (page 170).
73. Ibid.
74. See Section 1.1 for a discussion of the 'New Humanist' group.
75. Ibid.
76. See: Builder (July 25, 1952) p.122, AJ (July 31, 1952) p.127, AJ (Aug 7, 1952) pp.157-158, AD (Aug 1952) p.237, AR (Nov, 1956) pp.314-315, Architect and Building News (June 4, 1958) pp.736-742.
77. GLRO, H.Com., Minutes 1952, vol.15, 2nd July.
78. GLRO, H.Com., presented papers May-June 1952, vol.112, 25th June.
79. C.A. St. John Wilson, 'Patterns in Living', Observer (July 20, 1952) p.8.
80. See Section 1.1, Paradigm 1: Le Corbusier and the International Modern Movement.
81. GLRO, H.Com., presented papers July 1952, vol.113, 16th July.
82. GLRO, H.Com., presented papers Nov. 1952, 26th November. 'New type maisonette - Tenants' Reactions'.
83. GLRO, H.Com., Minutes 1953, vol.115, 18th March.
84. C.St.John Wilson, 'Patterns of Living', op.cit.



85. See: The Builder (July 31, 1953) pp.164-165, The Architect and Building News (Aug 6, 1953) pp.148-151, Building (Sept. 1953) pp.340-342, AD (Feb, 1955) pp.50-51, AA Jnl (Jan, 1957) pp.142-148, AJ (Sept. 25, 1958) p.473, Builder (Jan 23, 1959) pp.174-181, Concrete Quarterly (Oct/Dec 1958) pp.1-9, AJ (June 29, 1961) p.976.
86. GLRO, H.Com., Minutes 1953, vol.116, 23rd September.
87. GLRO, H.Com., presented papers Sept, vol. 23rd September 1953. memo from the Finance Committee.
88. 'Le Corbusier's Unité d'Habitation' AR vol.109 (May 1951) pp.293-300.
89. Ibid, p.296.
90. Ibid.
91. Ibid.
92. See also R.S. Haynes 'Design and Image in English Urban Housing 1945-57' op.cit., pp.60-61.
93. Quotes in 'The Alton Est. Roehampton after 25 years', Housing Review, op.cit. p.171.
94. 'Le Corbusier's Unité d'Habitation' AR, op.cit, p.300.
95. See: The Builder (Oct. 10, 1958) pp.606-607), Official Architect (Jan, 1959) p.26.
96. GLRO, H.Com., Minutes 1953, vol.116, 7th October.
97. Quoted in The Builder, (10th October 1958), pp.606-607.
98. GLRO, H.Com., minutes 1955, vol.118, 16th March.
99. See section 1.3 for details of R. Stjernstedt's career and work in Sweden.
100. N. Pevsner, 'Roehampton - LCC Housing and the Picturesque Tradition', AR, vol.126 (July 1959).
101. R. Furneaux Jordan, 'LCC, New Standards in Official Architecture', AR, vol.120 (November 1956) p.322.
102. O. Cox in 'The Alton Est. Roehampton after 25 years', Housing Review, op.cit., p.170.
103. Ibid., pp.170-171.
104. Whitfield Lewis, in an interview on 24th May 1983, described his position in this way.
105. C. Lucas in an interview on 29th September 1983 suggested this.

106. 'Le Corbusier's Unité d'Habitation', AR, vol.109 (May 1951), p.299.

107. O. Cox in 'The Alton Est. Roehampton after 25 years' Housing Review, op.cit., p.170.

108. Of the architects in the Modern Movement/Corbusier group P.J. Carter, A.H. Colquhoun, W.G. Howell, J. Killock and S.F. Amis had been AA students.

109. Information for this discussion has been taken from RIBA biog. files and Times obituaries.

The

Conclusion.

1. 'Change of Government', AJ (Nov 8, 1951) p. 549.
2. Ibid.
3. See section 2.3 for a discussion of architects' backgrounds.
4. Labour Party, Housing and Planning after the War, (London: 1943).
5. L. Escher, A Broken Wave - The Rebuilding of England 1940-1980 (London: Allen Lane, 1981) p. 26.
6. 'Evidence submitted by the RIBA to the Sub-committee on design of dwellings...', RIBA Journal, vol. 159, (October 1942) p. 207.
7. J. Madge, The Rehousing of Britain (London: Pilot Press, 1945).
8. Labour Party, Housing and Planning after the War (London: 1943).

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